

# Inspection of The Sybil Elgar School

The National Autistic Society, Havelock Road, Southall UB2 4NY

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Inspection dates: 5 to 7 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love attending this school. Parents and carers spoke of the excitement with which their children approach each day. Pupils arrive at school full of energy and enthusiasm every morning. They relish the many special days and events that take place throughout the year such as fundraising on Jeans for Genes Day, and the school's recent mathematics and reading weeks.

Leaders work with parents before pupils join the school, and they make sure that learning is matched to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils rapidly develop a sense of belonging at the school. Pupils feel safe, cared for and respected. They form trusting working relationships with the adults in the school who know each pupil well.

Staff work with compassion and kindness. They have the highest expectations for each pupil, helping them to problem-solve, become more independent and achieve highly. Pupils leave the school ready for the next phase of their lives after having comprehensive careers education and guidance that recognises their strengths and aspirations.

Pupils are kind and considerate towards others. Their behaviour is exceptional. Staff do not tolerate bullying, and they deal with it quickly should it occur.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Pupils receive an exceptional education at this school. Leaders have planned a high-quality curriculum that is taught by staff who have expertise in working with pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Parents are uniformly positive about the school and how it has transformed the lives of their children and their families.

Leaders plan every subject so that teachers can adapt lessons and use resources to meet the needs of individual pupils. They anticipate and help pupils to overcome any difficulties they may have with their learning, and they enable them to achieve very well. Leaders ensure staff have high-quality training so that the school's curriculum is taught successfully.

The school offers a wide range of subjects. Leaders have organised the curriculum based on the goals and outcomes that they know pupils need to attain. Staff ensure that pupils build up and retain the knowledge and skills that they are taught in school.

Leaders ensured that pupils had access to high-quality education throughout the lockdown. They were able to offer remote and blended learning to all pupils, while ensuring that parents knew how to keep their child safe online.

Leaders make sure that teaching pupils to read and communicate is a top priority across the school. Staff are trained to teach phonics and develop pupils' communication skills effectively. Pupils love books and show joy and enthusiasm when

reading and listening to stories. Leaders plan activities that encourage pupils' enjoyment of literature and promote their personal development. Pupils take part in literary events, such as World Poetry Day, and read texts that guide them towards making good choices.

Staff use assessment in a systematic and effective way. They gather detailed knowledge about the pupils that they teach. Teachers and the in-house therapy team communicate with each other daily. This provides teachers with a joined-up picture of how well each pupil is doing. From this information, they regularly review and develop pupils' targets and pathways as pupils remember and build on prior learning.

Pupils rise to the staff's high expectations that they behave well because of the strong and nurturing relationships that exist across the school. Pupils can remove themselves safely from situations that may escalate and are able to self-regulate throughout the day. This means that learning can continue uninterrupted.

Pupils enjoy the practical nature of their learning in many subjects such as cookery and design and technology (DT). The school encourages all pupils to be enterprising and to use the products that they have made to fundraise and learn business skills. The student committee leads discussion about how to improve the school further and has been instrumental in promoting special events such as the recent recycling week.

Teachers are dedicated, hard-working and relentless in seeking the best for all pupils. They skilfully and sensitively prepare pupils for their next steps. Leaders' careful planning when pupils move to different year groups or sites reduces anxiety for pupils and their families, making necessary change smoother and as stress-free as possible. Staff who responded to the survey had no concerns about workload. They are happy to go above and beyond what leaders expect for the pupils in their care.

Older pupils achieve qualifications, including some GCSEs and a range of functional skills. In the sixth form, pupils work towards a range of accredited academic and vocational qualifications in subjects such as geography. The school provides a highly effective programme of personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education. Leaders prioritise this area of learning because they understand and recognise the challenges to their mental health and well-being the pupils face. Teachers use their relationships and sex education curriculum to support pupils as they grow and develop knowing, as they do, the additional risks and vulnerabilities that puberty will bring. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy in the way their elected representatives lead in decision-making in the student council.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, ensure that all the independent school standards are met by checking them thoroughly and regularly. The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website.

School leaders have implemented a suitable accessibility plan, in line with requirements. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietors work closely in partnership with an exceptional leadership team to continuously improve what they offer to young people and their families.

The school buildings are well maintained and the outdoor space available is used effectively to bring different curriculum areas, such as science, to life. Staff keep parents, social care workers and local authorities regularly updated. Stakeholders who spoke to inspectors all described the school team as responsive and effective.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are kept safe because of the rigorous and detailed procedures leaders have in place. Staff complete regular specialist training to ensure they understand pupils' safeguarding risks. Leaders collect and analyse information related to the well-being of their pupils. Staff receive regular updates so that they know to be alert to any warning signs of any concerns. The school's child protection policy is written in line with the latest national guidance and is published on the school's website. Leaders ensure that recruitment checks on the adults who work with pupils are completed in line with requirements and are recorded carefully.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101953
<b>DfE registration number</b>	307/6064
<b>Local authority</b>	Ealing
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204290
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 22
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	96
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	34
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The National Autistic Society
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Roberts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chloe Phillips
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£40,074 to 63,443
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8813 9168
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.autism.org.uk/sybilelgar">www.autism.org.uk/sybilelgar</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk">sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	29 November to 1 December 2017

## Information about this school

- The Sybil Elgar School is an independent special day school for pupils who have ASD and other complex needs. It is situated on two sites. The second site is at Mill Hill Road, Acton W3 8RR.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed at the school by a wide range of local authorities.
- The school does not operate separate early years provision. At the time of the inspection, there was a very small number of children of below compulsory school age. The school does not have provision for two-year olds.
- The previous standard inspection was in 2017, when the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school's leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors also met with some curriculum leaders and some class teachers.
- Inspectors met with the school committee.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority and with four governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, mathematics, PSHE and DT. This involved visiting classes, looking at pupils' work and speaking with pupils, subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books and examples of their learning.
- Inspectors talked to leaders about safeguarding, staff recruitment and training relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of other school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took account of a small number of written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the views of other parents.
- We took account of responses to the online survey for staff.

## **Inspection team**

Karen Matthews, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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