

Inspection of The Sybil Elgar School

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

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 October 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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?

The school provides pupils with an exceptional level of individual care and support. Leaders have high expectations that every pupil receives programmes of therapy and education tailored specifically to meet their needs. Pupils grow in confidence, independence and self-esteem. Pupils develop their social and communication skills and learn well in a wide range of subjects. They are well prepared for adulthood.

Adults treat pupils with dignity and respect, modelling the school's expectations of pupils. Pupils who met with inspectors conducted themselves sensibly, listening to each other and interacting positively. Staff know pupils well and know the support each pupil needs to be settled in school. Any upsets are swiftly resolved. Pupils are safe in school.

The school ensures that pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide variety of activities that broaden their experiences and interests. Pupils are excited to take part in outdoor pursuits, such as canoeing. One pupil reflected the delight of others when describing making hot chocolate on a bushcraft fire and going hiking. Pupils are proud of their achievements in national awards schemes and projects, including working with artists to create outdoor murals and with horticulturalists to help the school's garden to flourish. Pupils enjoy looking after the school's pets.

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

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to ensure that each pupil's learning is carefully designed, taking into account their individual needs and interests. Collaboration and communications between educators and health and social care specialists, in the school's transdisciplinary team, lead to a detailed and highly personalised curriculum for each pupil. Staff draw on their training and thorough insight into pupils' needs to set ambitious targets and enable pupils to achieve them.

The school has clearly identified the order in which knowledge and skills are taught to enable pupils to build their learning in well-thought-through steps. Therapies and personal development are skilfully woven through academic learning. For example, staff are highly considerate of pupils' sensory needs and therapeutic targets as pupils develop their fine motor skills while learning new techniques in cookery. Pupils are taught a broad range of themes as part of personal, social and health education (PSHE), such as ways to recognise risk and stay safe, including online.

Staff use high-quality resources to provide visual and verbal prompts that help pupils to remember key facts and vocabulary and develop their communication and reading skills. Staff recognise when pupils are ready to learn to use phonics, using well-chosen resources, including reading books, to give pupils reminders and practice of the sounds they are learning. Staff have received training so that there is an accurate and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. The school regularly checks how well pupils are learning and identifies when they are able to move to

more challenging texts. The well-stocked library and access to news publications all encourage pupils to read more.

The school prioritises equality of opportunities for all pupils to ensure that all benefit greatly from the school's wide variety of high-quality enrichment activities. Pupils gain much from taking on responsibilities. Members of the school council influence decision-making at the school, including giving catering ideas and promoting recycling. Pupils are encouraged to overcome considerable challenges, grow in maturity and develop their personal and social skills through making positive contributions to the school's environment and taking part in events in the wider community. Beyond the academic curriculum, pupils perform in musical productions and go on residential excursions.

Pupils are very well prepared for their next stages of education, employment or training. Staff carefully construct individual plans for each pupil's smooth movement to the post-16 site, recognising the anxiety this could cause for some. The school has built up an impressive range of links with organisations in the local community to support pupils' learning and development. Students in the post-16 provision all complete work experience placements organised thoughtfully to complement their skills and aspirations. Students acquire valuable employability skills and are able to access and gain qualifications in an extensive range of accredited courses. Staff help students to plan for life after school at an early stage, supporting them and their families, for example through joint visits to potential further education providers.

The school ensures that all staff know and understand the individual strategies to help pupils overcome barriers to their learning and engagement with others around them. Staff have clear and consistent expectations for how pupils conduct themselves around the school. Typically, lessons and routines at social times are calm and purposeful. Pupils are attentive to their teachers and form positive, professional relationships with staff. Attendance is high. The school follows up on absences promptly and supports families when improvements to attendance are needed.

Staff receive training that supports them in their roles. Leaders are approachable and take into consideration staff's workload and well-being. Leaders have nurtured a cohesive staff team that collaborates closely to enable pupils to thrive. The school works with outside organisations and groups, including universities, local authorities and specialist advisers, to continually review, refine and share good practice in the teaching of pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Leaders forge strong links with parents and carers to identify and agree key strategies that support their child's learning at school and at home.

The proprietor has overseen a restructuring of governance and maintains a close and systematic oversight of the work of the school. The proprietor body ensures that the independent school standards are understood and met.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	101953
DfE registration number	307/6064
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	10322567
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 22
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	26
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	National Autistic Society
Chair	Stephen Ladyman
Headteacher	Chloe Phillips
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,604 to £99,744
Telephone number	020 8813 9168
Website	www.autism.org.uk/sybilelgar
Email address	sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 November 2022

Information about this school

- The Sybil Elgar School is an independent day school for pupils who have ASD and other complex needs. It is situated on two sites. The post-16 provision is at Mill Hill Road, Acton W3 8RR.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans, and are placed at the school by several local authorities.
- The school's most recent inspection was an additional inspection in November 2022. The previous standard inspection was in October 2021.
- The school does not use any 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.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the director of education representing the proprietor body. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with members of the advisory board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, design and technology and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, communicated with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked closely at the personalised curriculum offer for a large sample of pupils across all key stages.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors completed tours of the school premises on both sites accompanied by school leaders to consider the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff in responses to surveys. An inspector held conversations with several parents. There were no responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors took account of pupils' views in meetings with pupils and in responses to surveys recently carried out by the school.

Inspection team

Amanda Fraser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sam Hainey

His Majesty's Inspector

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