

Inspection of Woodside School

25 Ravensdale Avenue, London N12 9HP

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school and they feel safe. They greet the staff with happy faces and this is reciprocated. They like the lessons and the many activities that the school provides. For example, pupils love the big trampoline in the outside area, trips to equine therapy and regular swimming lessons at a local pool.

Staff know the needs of the pupils very well. They observe pupils closely to check that they are happy and feeling calm and that they are ready to learn. Unkind behaviour between pupils does not happen very often. If there are ever any problems with friendships, staff spot this very quickly and sort it out.

The school expects pupils to do their best in lessons and to behave well. Pupils try hard in class but do not achieve as well as they could because leaders are still in the process of putting a well-organised curriculum in place. Pupils treat each other and the adults in a respectful way. Sometimes pupils need extra help to be calm and regulated. When this happens staff provide appropriate support in a respectful and professional way so that pupils can get back to their learning as soon as possible. Pupils are well cared for and make strong progress in their personal development and social skills.

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

The pastoral support for pupils is well established, and all staff share the leaders' vision to help pupils succeed and flourish. Pupils are well supported. This is important because pupils at this school have previously had a fragmented education, with significant gaps in their school attendance. Some had not attended school for extended periods before they arrived at this school.

Pupils are relaxed in the care of the adults who work in the school. Pupils benefit from the secure working attachments that they build with staff and with other pupils. School staff know the pupils very well. They spot any small sign that might mean that a pupil needs help. They provide this support quickly, for example if a pupil is getting upset or if they need a short break from lessons to move around or get some exercise.

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has grown since the last inspection, and the needs of the pupils have broadened. The school carries out assessments when pupils join the school to see what they already know and what they can do independently. This leads to staff having a secure understanding of each pupil's abilities at the start. However, the school is not yet able to track pupils' onward journey through the curriculum effectively, because the sequenced steps of knowledge they want pupils to know and remember are not mapped out well enough. This is because the school is part way through a major change to the curriculum to make sure that it meets the bespoke needs of all pupils. At the time of this inspection, these changes are not finished and there are gaps in the curriculum. This means that pupils are not

routinely getting the high-quality teaching they need to gain sufficient new knowledge and skills to make strong progress in line with their abilities. Leaders know what needs to be done and are working with the proprietor and other staff to make these changes quickly.

Some pupils are fluent readers. Others are not yet ready for the introduction of phonics and use digital apps to communicate their needs and wants based on a pictorial approach. A few are learning to read, and the school has recently adopted a structured approach to phonics, but this is still in the very early stages of implementation. This means that a few pupils have not learned to read as confidently and fluently as they could.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and respectful. They are interested in visitors and courteous to adults. Pupils sometimes need extra help to manage their emotions, and at these times, adults remain calm. They act quickly to give pupils the help they need to engage with learning again. Most pupils had very sporadic school attendance before joining this school. Once they arrive here, they make rapid improvement in this area and attend regularly.

Promoting pupils' personal development is a priority at the school. There is a wide range of activities that supports pupils' social and emotional development, including weekly art therapy, sensory massage and aromatherapy. Pupils are taught important life skills, including how to make and keep friends and how to stay safe online. They are schooled about the world of work, safe and healthy relationships and the similarities and differences of different community groups and cultures. Staff train pupils in strategies to manage their emotions by themselves, which means that they are better prepared for adult life.

Staff like working at the school. They feel that leaders consider their well-being and help to make sure that their work-life balance is reasonable.

The proprietor body and school leaders have not ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards. The school is not compliant in having a risk assessment policy, a suitable medical room and hot water that does not pose a scalding risk. Although the school has a website, at the time of the inspection, it was out of date and the required information was not published on it. The school's 'welcome letter' that provides information to parents and prospective parents does not contain all the required information. The school's policy and practice for complaints do not meet requirements.

The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor body is considering how to develop the capacity needed to manage the improvement that is required in this school. Governance is not currently fit for purpose. This has contributed to the school no longer meeting the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open culture of safeguarding at the school. The proprietor and school staff are vigilant and take quick action, working effectively with safeguarding partners when they need to.

At the time of the inspection, there were several administrative and procedural weaknesses found. The school was able to put these right immediately. For example, there were gaps in the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff. Staff had received training in safeguarding matters, but this did not emphasise sufficiently the additional vulnerabilities faced by pupils with SEND in the school. The named designated safeguarding lead is the proprietor who sometimes works in other settings. Leaders need to make more regular checks on key pieces of information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum is not well thought through and ambitious enough for all pupils. This means that pupils are not realising their full potential. The school should ensure that the curriculum sets out in sufficient detail the sequenced knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn and remember.
- Some aspects of safeguarding practice require strengthening. Some requirements were not met at the start of the inspection, though were rectified before the inspection concluded. Leaders should strengthen their oversight of safeguarding to make sure that systems and practices are checked and monitored on a regular basis. This includes:
 - ensuring that a trained designated safeguarding lead is available throughout the school day
 - checks on the system for recording concerns
 - oversight of the single central record of pre-employment checks
 - ensuring that staff receive regular training in safeguarding that takes into account the context of pupils within the school.
- The proprietor body and school leaders are not rigorous enough in checking that the school meets all the independent school standards. They should establish mechanisms to keep up to date with and monitor carefully compliance with all statutory guidance.

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	148155
DfE registration number	302/6019
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10322608
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Seva Childcare Ltd
Headteacher	Laila Ahmed (also known as Laila Shire) (Education Manager)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 to £90,000
Telephone number	07956 351971
Website	www.woodside-school.co.uk
Email address	mark@sevahomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 June 2022

Information about this school

- The school is operating beyond its registration agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). This is because it has changed premises. It is now operating out of 63 Northiam, London, N12 7JH. This is a temporary address until the school moves again in September 2024 to permanent premises. The school had not informed the DfE of this move to temporary premises.
- The named headteacher on the DfE website, Get Information about Schools, is Katerina Cahill. She was not present at the time of the inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- All pupils who attend the school are pupils with SEND. They all have an education, health and care plan with either autism or social, emotional and mental health needs as the main area of need.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Leaders met with the proprietor, the education manager and other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, communication, reading, physical education and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- 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.
- To check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors carried out a range of activities, including meeting with leaders, a site walk to check the premises, looking at the content on the school's website and

scrutinising the school's records and documentation.

- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's confidential surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gaynor Roberts

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2(A)(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy;

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including-
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(1)(d) following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is

published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection;

- 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006[16]) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State;
- 32(1)(i) where a pupil with an EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a local authority or other body through public funds is registered at the school, such information as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the EHC plan is provided to the responsible local authority; and
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(2)(a) the school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher;
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(3)(a) particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
 - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2;
 - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13;
 - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year; and
 - 32(3)(g) a copy of the report of any inspection carried out under sections 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act or section 87(1) of the 1989 Act.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is-
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;

- 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and-
- 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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