

Side By Side School

9 Big Hill, London E5 9HH

Inspection dates

6–8 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads this unique school for pupils who have a wide range of complex needs with passion and drive. He, his team and the governors have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The curriculum is balanced, relevant and appropriate in meeting pupils' special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are good, including in the early years provision. Teachers, therapists and learning support assistants work together effectively to meet pupils' varied and complex learning needs. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are well looked after. The multi-disciplinary staff team cares deeply about pupils. Parents and carers trust the school's staff to keep their children as safe as possible.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding; they love their school. Pupils were eager to show inspectors what they were learning, and are very proud of their achievements.
- Parents and carers are extremely positive. They say that the school excels in communicating with them and that their children are safe, stimulated and happy.
- Leaders are improving their assessment system. It is designed to track pupils' progress as robustly in all subjects as it does in English and mathematics.
- Leaders acknowledge that they have not paid enough attention to detail when documenting safeguarding concerns, referrals, and communication with external agencies. They also now know that they must seek permission from the Department for Education (DfE) to change their registration agreement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders accurately and consistently document safeguarding concerns, referrals to external agencies and any subsequent communication
 - leaders always communicate with the registration authority (the DfE) to request changes to their registration agreement instead of implementing them without permission, such as by exceeding their maximum capacity.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by accurately measuring, recording and reviewing pupils' progress in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The governors, headteacher, senior leaders and staff are all equally passionate about providing an effective provision for pupils at Side By Side School. They work effectively together to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The school is truly and uniquely inclusive. This is best exemplified by the fact that children with complex SEN and/or disabilities learn alongside mainstream children 'side by side' in the early years provision. There is a calm, caring and pupil-centred ethos throughout the school. Side By Side is a happy place to be; pupils love being there and are made to feel special, successful and safe. At the same time, leaders balance this excellent level of care and nurture with high expectations of pupils' learning, behaviour and progress.
- Parents are universally and overwhelmingly positive about their experiences of the school. They say how communicative leaders and staff are, and comment on the 'fantastic' progress that their children make.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet pupils' needs and has a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It includes all the required areas of learning as well as daily Jewish studies. A range of therapies, including speech and language, occupational, physio and music, are provided to pupils on an individual or group basis in line with their specific needs. Older pupils work towards accredited learning in employability and social and personal development. The curriculum is enhanced by trips such as recent visits to museums and a wildlife reserve, and twice-weekly work-experience placements for the most able pupils. The focus on Jewish religious education is balanced well with secular studies. Leaders are committed to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain as well-rounded Jewish citizens, and actively promote equality and diversity as a matter of course.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' individual education plans, are effective in maintaining high standards. The headteacher's informal daily learning walks and formal termly visits to classrooms are well linked to the supervision and appraisal system for teachers. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Leaders acknowledge that they should have requested permission from the registration authority to exceed their maximum registered capacity of 80 pupils.

Governance

- The arrangements for governance are effective.
- The chair of governors is passionate about the difference the school makes to the life chances of the pupils and families it serves. He has a secure knowledge of the school and provides regular monitoring of, and support to, the headteacher.
- Governors consider most aspects of the school's performance at their termly governance meetings. They also regularly visit the school to undertake formal monitoring visits of the quality of provision, health and safety, and safeguarding.

- The process for managing the performance of the headteacher is thorough and effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils, who are all especially vulnerable, are kept as safe as possible. They learn effectively about how to keep themselves safe. Parents and carers trust the school to take good care of their children.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is available on the school's website. All the required pre-employment vetting checks on staff, governors and trustees are undertaken in line with statutory requirements.
- The school's headteacher is knowledgeable and accessible to staff and pupils. He takes safeguarding seriously and facilitates a culture of care and vigilance.
- During the inspection, a meeting with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding identified some shortcomings. For example, while staff receive ongoing training to recognise signs that pupils are at risk of harm, checks on their understanding of the latest national, local and internal guidance evidently need to be stronger. Until the inspection, leaders did not record concerns, referrals and actions taken, either formally or meticulously enough. They also did not seek advice and guidance from professionals in the local authority's safeguarding team regularly enough. In response to inspectors' concerns, the headteacher took immediate and effective action. This included making contact with the local authority's designated safeguarding officer, introducing a central safeguarding log and taking immediate formal responsibility as the school's designated safeguarding leader.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good. The school is a nurturing, caring and happy place. However, this culture of care does not detract from the strong focus on pupils' progress; teachers carefully balance high levels of support with high expectations of pupils' learning.
- Pupils learn well across all subjects. This is thanks to the very high levels of support, small class sizes and excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Therapists work alongside teachers as a matter of course to facilitate effective learning. Lessons are thoroughly planned to meet pupils' individual needs and to be as interesting and engaging as possible. As a result, pupils are excited about their learning and are enthused to do well.
- High-quality lessons and therapy sessions are supported by a range of effectively deployed resources, including inclusive 'eye gaze' technology which enables, for example, non-verbal pupils to make good progress.
- The most able pupils, who are typically the oldest pupils aged 15 to 19, were excited to tell inspectors about their learning. They have achieved 'bronze' accreditation in personal development and are excited and ambitious to achieve silver and gold. As part of their timetable, pupils have created a library from scratch, which they manage as a team on a weekly basis. They also access weekly individual and team work-experience placements. This focus on employability, independent living and social skills is preparing pupils well for

their futures.

- Teachers systematically check pupils' starting points in English and mathematics. These checks inform lesson planning, and leaders review pupils' progress in these core areas. However, while pupils' work and annual school reports show that pupils make good progress across the curriculum, leaders are starting to identify pupils' starting points and subsequent progress across the wider curriculum as closely as they do in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers, therapists and learning support assistants work effectively together to develop pupils' emotional well-being and social skills. As a result, pupils' confidence rises quickly. Pupils love their school and want to share their enthusiasm for learning with visitors.
- Pupils and parents were universally confident in telling inspectors that there are no concerns about safety. Pupils have as strong an understanding as is possible of how to keep themselves safe. The school's ethos and curriculum enable pupils to make healthy choices and to become caring, tolerant and respectful.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps, including in relation to careers education. Pupils successfully proceed to mainstream secondary schools or other specialist provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave as well as they possibly can. They have excellent attitudes towards their learning and work really hard because they want to do well. Pupils make excellent progress in managing their emotions and their behaviours over time.
- Staff understand pupils' complex needs. They manage pupils' challenging behaviours calmly, consistently and sensitively.
- There are no records of sanctions for misbehaviour or bullying because there have not been any such incidents.
- Pupils attend very well. Where there is absence, it is for medical reasons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have a wide range of complex SEN and/or disabilities. These include profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, moderate learning difficulties and a wide range of medical needs. Many pupils therefore make very small steps of progress over time, but this progress is typically good.
- Pupils make especially good progress in their personal development. Their emotional well-being, self-esteem and social skills improve as a matter of priority.
- Pupils, including the most able, make good progress in all subjects over time, especially in

their reading and numeracy skills.

- The school successfully readies pupils, as appropriate, for mainstream education. For example, in the past year a number of pupils have successfully proceeded to neighbouring mainstream schools, and a student has been successfully placed at a specialist further education college.
- Annual reports to parents provide qualitative information about pupils' progress in all subjects. They reflect the good progress seen in pupils' work. However, pupils' exact starting points on entry to the school, and therefore their progress over time, are not as clear in other subjects as they are in English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders ensure that children are safe in the early years provision. Welfare arrangements are effective and the provision meets all the requirements of the independent school standards.
- A hallmark of the school's ethos is children who have SEN and/or disabilities learning 'side by side' with the other children. Children with profound and complex needs benefit from learning and playing alongside more-able children in this uniquely inclusive environment.
- There is a calm, happy atmosphere throughout the early years provision. Staff work positively and professionally to support children's sometimes challenging behaviour. Very positive working relationships enable children to make good progress.
- Staff plan activities that cover all aspects of the early years framework so that children are well prepared for Year 1. Therapists carefully assess the children and implement programmes collaboratively with teaching staff. This work ensures that needs are identified early and addressed effectively.
- Children make good progress thanks to the wide range of appropriately planned and resourced activities which engage their attention. Teachers, therapists and learning support assistants engage well with children in their learning, providing support which enables them to develop their skills through play, exploration and experience.
- Staff communicate very well with parents, who are kept informed of their child's progress through the use of link books. Children's achievements are celebrated widely, both in class, on displays and with their parents.
- The indoor learning environment is bright, purposeful and well resourced. Though children do not have free access to outdoor learning, teachers facilitate satisfactory daily provision for this through a variety of structured activities.

School details

Unique reference number	133439
DfE registration number	204/6409
Inspection number	10038165

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

Type of school	Jewish day school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Side By Side (Children Ltd)
Chair	Jacob Sorotzkin
Headteacher	Gerald Lebrett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000–31,000
Telephone number	020 8880 8300
Website	www.sidebyside.org.uk
Email address	school@sidebyside.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–11 December 2014

Information about this school

- Side By Side School is an independent special day school serving the Jewish community in North London.
- Pupils experience a wide range of difficulties, ranging from profound and multiple to moderate learning difficulties. Many have additional complex medical needs.
- Pupils with education, health and care plans currently stay on roll to the age of 16 or 19. However, the school does not offer separate sixth-form provision. Those without SEN and/or disabilities move into mainstream education prior to their fifth birthday. Children in the Nursery Year attend full time and are taught 'side by side', regardless of their ability

or needs.

- Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Some are bilingual, speaking English and Yiddish, or English and Hebrew, at home. Most pupils are from an Orthodox Jewish background.
- The school is currently operating outside its registration agreement. This is because its registered maximum capacity with the DfE is 80. There are currently 89 pupils on roll.
- The school's trustees have purchased new premises. They plan, depending on gaining the relevant planning permissions and the duration of building works, to relocate the school to these premises in 2019.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.
- The school's last full standard inspection was in December 2014.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed a wide range of teaching, some jointly with the headteacher. They met with two groups of pupils and held a meeting with staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and spoke with a senior representative from the local authority. Inspectors also met with all members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors considered the school's information about pupils' progress and their attendance and behaviour. They also scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the four responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke with seven parents by telephone.
- Inspectors considered the 25 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including policies, logs and other information related to safeguarding and health and safety.
- Inspectors toured the premises and considered additional information in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Rick Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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