

Snowflake School

46a Longridge Road, London SW5 9SJ

Inspection dates

12 to 14 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Trustees and leaders have maintained the excellent quality of education since the previous inspection. They have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Snowflake is a happy and inclusive school where pupils are safe and settled. Staff know pupils exceptionally well.
- Staff plan highly personalised curriculums for pupils. They work closely with parents and carers, therapists and other professionals to ensure that pupils' needs are fully understood.
- Teaching is excellent. Together with supervisors and other leaders, tutors monitor pupils' progress meticulously and make a significant difference to pupils' learning.
- Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points, particularly in the development of their social and communication skills. They also make strong and sustained progress, appropriate to their age and ability, in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum.
- This year, leaders have revised the approaches for assessing pupils' all-round development. Although the new system is well thought out and more effective, it is not fully embedded.
- All staff set very high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the consistent approaches used by all staff throughout the school.
- Trustees and the headteacher value the hard work of all members of staff. They provide opportunities for staff to extend their skills and gain extra qualifications. The high-quality programme of professional development has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Staff promote pupils' independence very effectively. Their efforts result in some achievements that are 'firsts' for individual pupils, such as managing a visit to the dentist.
- The curriculum is enriched in a variety of ways, including well-planned educational visits. Pupils celebrate festivals and events throughout the year and learn about the world around them.
- Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. Many travel long distances in order for their children to attend Snowflake. They are highly complimentary of the ways in which trustees, leaders and other staff have made a significant difference to their children's lives.

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?

- Fully embed the newly revised approaches for assessing pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The trustees, leaders and staff have maintained the outstanding quality of education since the previous inspection. Together, they have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders are highly ambitious and united in their vision for the school. They work tirelessly to raise the quality of teaching. Improving the lives of pupils and their families is at the heart of leaders' work, and all staff fully support this purpose. Throughout the school, staff morale is positive, and everyone works exceptionally well to meet pupils' needs.
- The new headteacher has made changes this year that have had a demonstrable impact on pupils' progress. Changes to the learning environment and improvements to the teaching of English and mathematics have strengthened pupils' learning.
- School improvement planning is very effective. The headteacher has a secure understanding of the school's strengths. He has also identified the right priorities for improvement and ensures that staff and trustees understand these. Plans are in place to further develop the school's outdoor area and enhance the opportunities for sensory learning.
- Leaders and trustees provide effective opportunities for staff to develop their skills and obtain additional qualifications. Leaders monitor the work of tutors very effectively. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of what constitutes outstanding learning and progress. Ongoing feedback ensures that all staff are continually supported to improve their teaching skills.
- The curriculum is well thought out. Each pupil has a highly personalised curriculum that meets their needs. Leaders work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that each pupil's needs are fully understood. Leaders make sure that there are opportunities for pupils to be independent and learn functional life skills throughout the curriculum.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The annual calendar incorporates a wide variety of occasions for pupils to celebrate special events, religious festivals and learn about others. Weekly themes, shared with parents, cover a range of aspects, including safety and personal well-being.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning. Communication between home and school is very effective. The weekly newsletter keeps parents up to date with events and achievements, and the 'daily diary' enables tutors and parents to share key information about pupils' welfare and learning. Parents all compliment the exceptional understanding of their children's needs shown by staff. They are pleased with the quality of teaching and delighted with their children's progress.

Governance

- The chair of trustees is extremely well respected by parents and staff. Together with the other trustees, she has ensured that the school has gone from strength to strength. Trustees ensure that the school is well resourced and that standards are high.
- Trustees are highly supportive of the headteacher and other staff. They are united in their vision to provide the very best opportunities for pupils and their families. Trustees bring a range of expertise to the school. They use their skills very effectively to continually improve the school.
- Trustees meet regularly to ensure that the school is strategically well led. The chair meets with the headteacher each week to discuss teaching, learning and pupils' safety and welfare. The minutes of all leadership meetings demonstrate, very clearly, that trustees hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher's reports to trustees are thorough. They provide trustees with detailed and up-to-date information about staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and incorporates the latest safeguarding legislation.
- Parents say that their children are safe in school. Regular communication with staff reassures parents that pupils' welfare and care needs are met. The designated safeguarding leaders ensure that all incidents are recorded meticulously. They bring together all information about pupils to ensure that they have a clear overview of their well-being.
- Staff are well trained. They know how to report concerns about pupils' welfare and understand the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with autism spectrum disorder and other complex needs.
- The use of individual plans for each pupil means that all staff understand how to manage potential risks to pupils' safety. Staff take great care in making sure that behaviour plans and individual risk assessments are updated regularly. This enables them to support pupils in a range of situations, including on educational visits.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Staff work closely with parents from the time pupils join the school. Staff gather a range of information from parents and other professionals in order to support their initial assessments of pupils' learning and development.
- Pupils' means of communication, their social and language skills and their abilities in different subject areas are all well understood by staff. Tutors and supervisors monitor pupils' progress meticulously. They record information about pupils' achievements in each session. This information is checked carefully and analysed so that any changes to pupils' programmes are well planned and evidence based. As one parent said, 'Staff always work out a plan, and they never give up.'
- Pupils' daily routines are very well planned to promote their language and communication

skills. Staff use teaching approaches consistently well throughout the school. Each day, pupils take part in a series of one-to-one intensive language and communication sessions with their tutors. They have regular opportunities to generalise their skills in different environments and in a range of contexts, such as in craft activities and out in the playground.

- Staff know pupils extremely well. They incorporate pupils' interests into their sessions very effectively. Throughout the school, staff have very high expectations of pupils' learning. They set ambitious targets for themselves and the pupils. Staff persist superbly well in order for pupils to master new skills.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is very effective. Pupils are well supported to develop an interest in stories and other texts. The teaching of phonics is very well planned and the input from the school's speech and language therapist is used effectively. Staff make excellent use of resources and use a range of well-thought-out approaches to develop pupils' comprehension skills.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in group activities as part of their daily routines. For example, pupils had great fun making the sounds of different animals as part of their musical storytelling session. They selected the instruments of their choice and joined together with the group to create music.
- Games sessions promote pupils' physical development very well. Pupils enjoy working with the sports coach and their tutors to move around in different ways and develop throwing and catching skills in readiness for their game of basketball. Throughout the year, pupils have opportunities to go swimming and take part in a range of outdoor activities.
- Staff develop pupils' communication skills exceptionally well. The use of information technology in the school is increasingly effective. Leaders have invested in purchasing additional tablets and computer equipment, and these are used very effectively as aids to pupils' communication. Information technology is also used well across the curriculum. For example, pupils use software to express their choices as part of art and technology sessions.
- This year, leaders have revised the approaches to assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and the other subjects. This is enabling leaders to have an even better picture of pupils' all-round learning and development. However, this system is relatively new and is not fully embedded for all pupils. Leaders have strong and effective plans in place to further improve assessment arrangements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are happy, safe and settled. All staff know each pupil extremely well. They develop productive partnerships with parents in order to meet pupils' ongoing care needs. Medical care plans are completed thoroughly. Leaders make sure that pupils' medical and dietary needs are very well understood by staff.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum incorporates opportunities for pupils to learn about

safety. Leaders make sure that pupils use the internet safely in school. In all sessions, staff ensure that pupils are well supervised and use resources safely.

- Staff promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence exceptionally well. They use praise constantly and celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils delight in mastering skills and receiving 'high-fives' and other rewards for their excellent achievements.
- Pupils enjoy many opportunities to work and play with their peers. Lunchtimes and outdoor play, for example, are used very effectively to support their social skills and to promote independence and self-care skills.
- Staff support parents and their children with transitions to new schools and further education. They ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Throughout the school, staff share very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, there is a strong and consistent approach, which helps pupils to feel secure and happy.
- Incidents are managed very effectively by all staff. Staff are always monitoring pupils' behaviour and keeping a check on the things that may cause pupils to be angry or upset. They implement pupils' individual behaviour plans exceptionally well, and this helps to keep pupils safe.
- Staff understand pupils' barriers to learning and consistently look for ways to reduce them. They meet regularly as a staff team to discuss strategies that work best for each pupil. As a result, incidents have reduced since the start of the year.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is high. Some parents travel long distances to bring their children to this school. They are highly complimentary of the ways in which staff meet their children's personal development needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The excellent work of tutors, supervisors, teachers and therapists all contributes to pupils' outstanding progress in all areas of their learning and development. They make particularly strong progress in developing their language and communication skills.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' education, health and care plans are well understood by staff. Staff and therapists work closely with parents to set short-term targets for pupils. These targets are monitored very effectively and reviewed regularly. This ensures that no time is wasted in helping pupils to make progress.
- Pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics. Teachers work effectively with tutors to ensure that pupils' skills in these subjects are very well developed. Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that pupils learn a range of skills and are well supported to reach ambitious targets.
- Staff listen to parents' views about what they would like their children to achieve. Sometimes, these goals relate to overcoming challenges at home, such as managing a trip to the supermarket or having a check-up at the dentist. Staff support parents and the pupils remarkably well in achieving these goals. For example, using a range of well-

established and well-planned approaches, staff have supported pupils in shaving for the first time, having their hair cut at the barbers and tolerating injections at the doctors.

- Underpinning everything is the goal of helping pupils to move on to a less intense environment where they can be as independent as possible. Staff always keep this in mind. Over time, pupils' independence, social skills and skills for life improve considerably.
- All parents who shared their views during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about their children's progress. As one parent shared, 'When my child joined the school he was unable to repeat back a single word. He can now use words of his choice to request for the things he wants and needs.'

School details

Unique reference number	135616
DfE registration number	207/6408
Inspection number	10067176

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Snowflake School for Children with Autism Ltd
Chair	Faryaneh Akhavan
Headteacher	Roy English
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,892.00
Telephone number	020 7370 3232
Website	www.snowflakeschool.org
Email address	office@snowflakeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 January 2016

Information about this school

- Snowflake is an independent day school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. It is located in Earls Court in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Pupils are placed from a range of local authorities. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school's previous inspection took place in January 2016, when it was judged to be outstanding. The board of trustees is responsible for governance of the school. The headteacher joined the school in August 2018.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, chair of trustees and other trustees. He met with teachers, supervisors and tutors.
- The inspector visited all classes to observe pupils' learning. He spoke with staff during these visits and observed teaching in a variety of sessions, including one-to-one sessions, small-group work and outdoor games.
- The inspector looked at the school's assessment information, pupils' work and the records of their progress against their individual targets. He scrutinised pupils' personal programmes, behaviour plans and risk assessments.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection. He observed the procedures at the start and end of the day and during breaktime and lunchtime routines.
- The inspector held meetings with five parents to seek their views. He reviewed the free-text comments submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The 10 responses to the staff survey were also considered.
- The inspector looked at all parts of the school and evaluated a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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