

# The Corner School

1a Douglas Avenue, Wembley HA0 4DT

## Inspection dates

5–7 February 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils and their families are at the heart of the school's work. Trustees, governors and staff are highly ambitious for all pupils to achieve success and return to mainstream settings.
- Governors, including serving headteachers of other special schools, bring expertise and skill to the school. They work very effectively with the headteacher and trustees to promote pupils' safety, care and learning. They have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Therapists work well with other staff to meet pupils' needs. However, their work is not fully aligned to support pupils to make even better progress. Leaders provide good professional development opportunities for staff and acknowledge that, as the school grows, these need to be maintained to ensure that all staff are well trained to meet pupils' needs.
- Staff assess pupils' progress well. The headteacher has established a new system to set targets for pupils and measure their progress. However, this is at an early stage and does not capture pupils' all-round achievements. The new system is not fully embedded.
- Staff plan activities that pupils enjoy. They use a range of approaches effectively to help pupils engage in purposeful learning and make good progress. However, sometimes, teachers miss opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' learning.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in developing their concentration and listening skills. Parents and carers are especially pleased with the difference the school has made to their children's learning and behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and show kindness to others. Staff promote pupils' well-being and self-esteem very effectively.
- The curriculum is well planned to help pupils acquire skills across a range of subjects. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be independent in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy daily opportunities to play outside and leaders are improving the outdoor resources for pupils. While the school's physical education (PE) curriculum covers a range of activities to develop pupils' physical skills, it is not taught consistently well.

### 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:
  - the school’s assessment procedures are fully embedded so that pupils’ all-round achievements are captured and celebrated
  - the programme of professional development is maintained to ensure that all staff, particularly support staff, are well trained to meet the changing needs of pupils as the school grows.
- Strengthen further the quality of teaching and pupils’ outcomes, by ensuring that:
  - the collaboration between therapists and other staff is highly effective in setting pupils’ targets, sharing teaching approaches and measuring pupils’ progress
  - teachers make sure that pupils are provided with more opportunities to be independent in their learning
  - activities are sufficiently challenging and deepen pupils’ learning
  - the teaching of PE is consistently of the highest quality.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Trustees, governors and the headteacher have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Together, they have established a school that puts the very small number of pupils at the school and their families at the heart of everything that happens. Leaders are highly ambitious for the school and demonstrate a clear and united vision to make the school a success for pupils and their families.
- The headteacher and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's work. They are proud but not complacent; they work together effectively to plan for further improvements.
- The headteacher's strong and determined leadership brings a skilled and dedicated staff team together. The headteacher, well supported by her team, is always looking for ways to improve the school and opportunities to make a difference to pupils. She has established a range of partnerships with other schools, both locally and further afield, to share good practice and offer training opportunities for staff. Leaders acknowledge that as the school grows, the programme of professional development will need to be enhanced further to ensure that all staff, particularly support staff, are highly skilled in meeting the changing needs of pupils.
- Staff training has also taken place alongside the therapy team. Therapists work well with other staff to support pupils' needs. They share their expertise well and meet regularly to talk about pupils' next steps. However, aspects of this work are not yet fully integrated. These include setting targets for pupils, implementing strategies and teaching approaches, and measuring pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is well planned to help pupils acquire skills across a range of subjects. It incorporates pupils' social and emotional development effectively. It is enhanced by a variety of enrichment opportunities, including visits to landmarks in London as well as visits to the school from famous authors and world-class footballers, for example.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The well-planned curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education includes a range of opportunities for pupils to learn about themselves and others. Teachers use resources very effectively to help pupils to learn about different cultures and families.
- The school's values underpin the curriculum. The large tree painted on the wall in the central corridor is an excellent example of how staff and pupils acknowledge each other's strengths. Leaves are pinned to branches of the tree to celebrate special moments of respect, positivity and kindness. The school's work to promote equality is good.
- Parents and carers are extremely happy with the school and how well their children have settled. They speak of their child's remarkable progress, particularly in managing their feelings and behaviour. They are delighted that their child wants to come to school and enjoys learning. Staff work closely with parents to ensure effective continuity between home and school.

## Governance

- Although newly formed, the governing body is effective. Governors bring expertise to the school, including in the fields of special education and support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. They have used their skills very effectively to support the headteacher in establishing the school's systems and procedures.
- Governors also provide a level of challenge to the headteacher and staff. Together, they work well as a team to make sure that pupils are safe, well cared for and receiving a good-quality education. Governors report to the trustees who, in turn, ensure that the school complies with the independent school standards and that the quality of education is continually improving.
- Trustees, governors and the headteacher all share the same vision and determination to ensure that the school meets the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They ensure that all staff are well trained in safeguarding arrangements and understand the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils' well-being is discussed at every meeting. Governors, trustees and school staff ensure that pupils' individual circumstances are well understood. They know families well and work closely with parents to keep pupils safe and well cared for. The school's work with families is strong, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The school's work with social services and other agencies is effective. Record keeping is robust and detailed. Staff use systems effectively to check pupils' welfare, behaviour and attendance. Individual risk assessments for each pupil help staff to meet pupils' behaviour needs and keep them safe from harm.
- Leaders keep up to date with the school's local context and any issues that may affect the pupils at this school. They work proactively with the local authority and other agencies to update their understanding of local and national safeguarding matters.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the website. It is appropriate and incorporates the latest government legislation. The school's single central record of staff suitability checks is compliant. Leaders ensure that recruitment procedures are robust.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe when using the internet. The PSHE education curriculum incorporates regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own safety and to learn how to stay safe in different situations.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Staff make sure that they have as much information as possible about each pupil's strengths, needs and circumstances before they join the school. They work effectively with other professionals to assess pupils' starting points accurately.
- Pupils' education, health and care plans are used to establish long- and short-term

targets. Staff meet regularly to discuss pupils' needs and plan activities to meet these. Therapy sessions, including occupational therapy, and speech and language and family therapy, are a central part of supporting pupils' needs.

- Therapists have started to work more closely with teachers and other staff so that teaching strategies and therapeutic approaches can be more closely aligned and understood. As yet, however, these are not fully complementary in supporting pupils' progress.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Staff use strategies effectively to enable pupils to segment and blend sounds to read and write words. Pupils read regularly at home and in school. The attractive reading corners in classrooms and in the main corridor raise the profile of reading. Other lessons are underpinned by high-quality children's texts. Teachers use these well to capture pupils' interests. For example, pupils responded very well to the story of 'Handa's Surprise' and were able to re-tell key parts, discuss the characters and create their own versions of the story.
- Staff follow pupils' interests and create activities that involve pupils in hands-on, practical tasks. For example, pupils enjoyed creating and eating 'silly sandwiches' as part of their lesson about instruction writing. Teachers also encourage pupils to use their imagination well, particularly in English sessions and the wider curriculum. The work in pupils' books and photographs of previous learning show that pupils dress up, take part in role play and experience a range of interactive activities to enhance their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. During the inspection, for example, pupils proudly explained the different fruits they had made from clay as part of their art and English lesson. Pupils enjoyed looking back through their workbooks and were proud of the quantity of work they had completed since joining the school.
- Classrooms are bright and inviting places to learn. Pupils respond to the genuine and consistent praise from the staff. Staff make the most of all opportunities to support pupils' self-esteem and boost their confidence.
- Sometimes, activities are not sufficiently challenging for pupils. Occasionally, pupils wait for tasks when they are ready to move on to more challenging activities. Additionally, opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning are not consistently effective. Sometimes, activities hold back pupils' learning, and chances for pupils to make independent choices in their learning are missed.
- Although the curriculum incorporates a range of opportunities for pupils to take part in sports and physical exercise, including dance, swimming and outdoor games, these lessons are not planned or delivered consistently well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- This is a happy and inclusive school where staff and pupils get on well together. All staff promote pupils' well-being very effectively. They want the best for pupils and set high expectations for learning and behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy breaktimes and socialise with their peers well. Staff engage in pupils' play,

lead team games with the pupils and join them at mealtimes.

- The curriculum is well planned to teach pupils about healthy lifestyles. During the inspection, pupils were completing activities related to 'children's mental health week'.
- Anti-bullying is given a high priority in school. Staff help pupils to learn about treating others kindly and how to resolve issues. Pupils completed posters to promote anti-bullying messages and displayed these proudly around the school.
- Staff provide different opportunities for pupils to learn about kindness and respect. For example, the arrival of the school guinea pigs has had a demonstrable impact on pupils. Pupils enjoyed feeding and taking care of their pets. They could explain the importance of being gentle and how to watch for signs that the guinea pigs might be anxious.
- Staff help pupils to understand and cope with different emotions. Each day, staff provide opportunities for pupils to talk and share their ideas and opinions. Pupils are well supported to manage changes in their routines and lives. For example, during the inspection, staff used a range of approaches to prepare a pupil for the arrival of a new baby in their family.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Over time, they learn how to manage their behaviour and understand the feelings of others.
- Lessons are usually very calm. Pupils are well supported to listen and focus on their learning. They demonstrate increasingly positive attitudes to their work.
- Pupils understand the school's routines and enjoy helping staff to establish their classroom rules for good behaviour and learning. Their conduct around the school is good. Pupils' behaviour during the fire drill, which took place during the inspection, was very good. Pupils left the building sensibly and followed all instructions well.
- Pupils enjoy the school's reward system. They are keen to work for their personalised rewards and understand the importance of making good behaviour choices. During the inspection, pupils were particularly excited to see the arrival of the rewards cabinet where football boots and other rewards will be displayed.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. They address challenging behaviour effectively and ensure that, at all times, pupils are safe and well supervised. Staff monitor pupils' behaviour and record all incidents thoroughly. They use this information effectively and address any issues swiftly.
- Pupils clearly enjoy school. They arrive happily in the mornings and enjoy the warm and friendly greetings from staff. Their enjoyment of school and their improved attitudes to learning are reflected in their good attendance.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- This school enables pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs to achieve. Often, pupils' prior settings have not been able to meet their needs and some pupils have been at risk of exclusion. For these pupils, the strongest progress is seen in their engagement with learning. Pupils settle well, and over time develop more positive attitudes to learning.

- Pupils learn how to understand their feelings and manage their behaviour. They learn how to share, take turns and wait for others. Pupils' social skills develop well, with the support and input of teachers and therapists. A key strength is the progress pupils make in their listening and attention skills. On joining the school, some pupils find focusing on activities challenging and struggle to join group tasks or to work with others. Over time, staff enable pupils to be successful at these things. Pupils understand the importance of learning and to trust and respond to the adults around them.
- Improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, and in their emotional development, lead to them making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although their attainment is low, staff ensure that gaps in their learning are addressed well.
- Although pupils make good progress, some are capable of even more. Sometimes, activities are not sufficiently challenging, and this hinders pupils' progress. Furthermore, weaknesses in the teaching of PE mean that pupils do not make the best possible progress in this subject.
- Parents are proud of their child's progress. One parent said, 'My child is like a different child – he wants to go to school and tell me about his learning.' All staff are fully determined to achieve the best possible outcomes for all pupils. Staff are committed to enabling pupils to return to mainstream schools having made good progress in all areas of their learning and personal development.

## School details

Unique reference number	145849
DfE registration number	304/6007
Inspection number	10067221

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 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	UP (Unlocking Potential)
Chair of Governors	Adrienne Cherrywood
Chair of Trustees	Stuart Roden
Headteacher	Noreen Rahman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,000 to £72,000
Telephone number	020 3405 7860
Website	<a href="https://thecornerschool.org.uk">https://thecornerschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:noreen.rahman@thecornerschool.org.uk">noreen.rahman@thecornerschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Corner School was registered by the Department for Education in July 2018 and opened on 1 September 2018. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The Corner School is an independent special school. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The school is located in Brent, although pupils are placed in the school from a range of local authorities.
- The proprietor is a charity trust that provides a range of services to children and families,



including therapeutic support. Trustees have delegated governance duties to the school's governing body, which was formed in December 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 observed learning in the two classrooms and observed a therapy session. He made several visits to lessons throughout the inspection and spoke informally to pupils and staff. The inspector observed social times, including lunchtime arrangements.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and discussed this with staff. He held formal meetings with teachers and support staff. The inspector spoke with the school's speech and language therapist and occupational therapist.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, chair of trustees, chair of governors and another governor. He scrutinised the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation and minutes of trustees' and governors' meetings.
- The inspector checked the single central record of staff suitability. Meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also met with the interim chief executive officer of the charity trust.
- The inspector reviewed written feedback from parents. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector toured the premises and scrutinised a range of documents to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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