

# Inspection of Social Arts for Education

253 Eltham High Street, London SE9 1TY

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Inspection dates: 22 to 24 June 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Staff understand pupils' social and emotional needs exceptionally well. They design ambitious pastoral support and academic programmes for every pupil. This dual approach enables pupils to regain confidence in their ability to achieve well. Pupils build their self-esteem and learn effectively.

The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the day. Pupils help each other and work diligently with teachers and support staff. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils said that they feel safe and that bullying is unheard of. Adults care for pupils well. Pupils know that adults would deal with any problems, should they arise. All parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire expressed gratitude and praise for the school's work in taking care of their children.

Leaders make sure that the curriculum prepares pupils well for adult life. The development of pupils' social skills is prioritised. In English, for example, teachers help pupils to reflect on characters' motivations, emotions and feelings. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to debate ethical issues. These encourage pupils to consider their own values as well as the views of others.

Leaders also provide pupils with many well-planned enrichment activities. For instance, before the first national lockdown, pupils ran a restaurant for a day. They cooked the food together and served customers.

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

The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many have lost confidence in education. Some have not attended their previous schools for long periods. Leaders and staff provide pupils with strong therapeutic support and a well-planned curriculum. As a result, pupils settle quickly in their new school and learn well.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning, including in the sixth form. They are determined that all pupils will succeed. When pupils join the school, leaders identify gaps in pupils' learning. They also find out what pastoral support pupils need to overcome their barriers to learning well. Leaders use the information to personalise pupils' programmes of study and pastoral support. Leaders continually review and adapt the curriculum to make sure it meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils.

The curriculum meets the requirements of the independent school standards, including in the sixth form. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. Typically, staff plan and deliver all aspects of the curriculum well. Staff consider carefully how to cater for pupils' needs without compromising on high expectations. Pupils enjoy learning about and discussing current events and global issues and trends. Leaders are looking at ways to improve the humanities curriculum further. Some aspects of subject planning do not map out the essential knowledge pupils should know, for instance, about significant events and human achievements. This limits pupils' ability

to understand how modern society and its challenges have been shaped by events and people in the past.

Leaders make sure that teachers have expertise in their subjects. Staff attend regular training to keep themselves up to date. In most subjects, teachers plan the curriculum in a logical way and are clear what they want pupils to know and remember. Pupils gain new knowledge and apply their learning to complex activities with success. Teachers and support staff frequently check pupils' understanding. If pupils make mistakes, staff quickly help them understand where they have gone wrong and how to improve their work.

Pupils achieve well in a range different subjects, including in the sixth form. They leave with qualifications that enable them to successfully access the next stages of their education, training or employment. These include GCSE, functional skills and vocational qualifications. Pupils also receive certifications and awards for other short courses, for example in art.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are first rate. Sixth-form students also behave very well. As a result of effective pastoral support and encouragement, pupils' attendance increases dramatically. Pupils are punctual and pay careful attention, without interruptions, throughout lessons. They are respectful and polite to everybody.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exemplary. Bespoke counselling and pastoral curriculum programmes help pupils to overcome their anxieties. They learn how to increasingly understand their emotions, as well as develop social skills. Staff aim to help pupils to become tolerant and accepting adults. They encourage them to contribute positively to society, for example by raising money for charities. Sixth-form students act as buddies to younger pupils. Leaders also provide a range of extra-curricular activities which are designed to identify and nurture pupils' individual talents.

The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is comprehensive. Pupils take part in a range of workshops delivered by leaders and external experts. They learn about healthy relationships, including consent. Pupils also know about the Equality Act 2010. They are taught to understand and respect all the protected characteristics. Pupils have a good understanding of British democracy and civic institutions. They also have plentiful opportunities to learn about global issues. For example, visitors recently spoke to them about ethical tourism.

Pupils benefit from a strong programme of impartial careers guidance. All have personal interviews and group workshops with an external careers counsellor. Pupils and students attend career fairs and open days at colleges and universities. Other than during the national lockdowns, pupils have opportunities to take part in work experience.

The proprietor body, school leaders and staff share the same vision and values. They strive to improve the lives and opportunities of pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND) and high levels of anxiety. Pupils' welfare, and that of pupils' families, is at the heart of their work. The trustees visit the school often and know about all aspects of the school. They set leaders clear strategic goals for improvement. Trustees are supportive of leaders and staff, and hold them to account for the school's performance.

Leaders make sure that the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements. Their accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff love their jobs and enjoy working together in the best interests of pupils. They appreciate that the proprietor body and senior leaders are considerate of staff well-being and workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and staff take part in regular training. They are acutely aware of the risks that pupils face, including those arising from pupils' additional needs. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to support pupils' welfare and safety. Staff know and discuss all pupils daily. Staff speak with parents often. Through this, leaders and staff help parents understand potential risks to their children and how they can support them.

Pupils said that they have a trusted adult they can speak with when they need to. They explained that staff regularly raise their awareness of risk and how to keep safe in various situations.

Leaders publish the safeguarding policy on the school's website. The policy complies with the most recent statutory guidance.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Although the curriculum is ambitious and tailored to pupils' needs, aspirations and personal development, it does not fully develop pupils' human and social knowledge. This means pupils do not develop a deep understanding of significant events and people in the past, and how these may have influenced the modern world. Leaders should plan a well-sequenced programme of study to stimulate a deeper appreciation of significant historical and geographical events and human achievements.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147199
<b>DfE registration number</b>	203/6006
<b>Local authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193530
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary day special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	22
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	7
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	19
<b>Proprietor</b>	Social Arts for Education
<b>Chair</b>	LaReo Riviere
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annabel Leaver
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£19,287 to £40,482
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8850 3286
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.safeschoolbexley.co.uk">www.safeschoolbexley.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@safeschoolbexley.co.uk">info@safeschoolbexley.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection since the school first registered to admit pupils in August 2019.
- The school is registered for up to 25 pupils in the age range of 11 to 18 years.
- The school provides for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs. Many have been out of full-time education for extended periods of time.
- Some pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities or by requests directly from parents.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

We 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, information and communication technology and PSHE education. This involved discussions with leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair and three members of the proprietor body, the headteacher and deputy headteachers. Inspectors had telephone conversations with SEND case officers from two local authorities.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out prior to the appointment of staff. Inspectors also looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of seven written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, nine responses to the staff survey and six responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors also scrutinised a range of documentary information to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.

## **Inspection team**

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Amanda Carter-Fraser

Her Majesty's Inspector



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