

Inspection of The Corner School

Douglas Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 4DT

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **No**

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff want the best possible outcomes for every pupil. They know how to help pupils build up their self-esteem and to experience success. Staff are firm but fair in managing behaviour. They are highly attuned to pupils' needs and emotions. They intervene skilfully to de-escalate situations quickly when pupils become overwhelmed. As a result, social times are typically calm, and pupils mostly work with diligence in lessons.

Teaching staff and therapists work well together. They plan group and individual sessions to develop pupils' social skills. This includes, for instance, teaching pupils to work together. Pupils learn to respect each other's right to take turns and to have their views heard.

Pupils also build up strong working relationships with the adults in school. This gives them a sense of safety and security. Pupils have a trusted person with whom they can share any concerns they may have. They are confident that adults will support them and deal with any problems that arise. Leaders deal with the rare occurrences of bullying effectively.

Pupils enjoy learning the broad range of subjects on offer. Through a highly personalised approach, leaders and staff make sure that pupils learn well and apply their knowledge effectively.

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

Leaders are determined that all pupils will learn successfully, irrespective of any barriers that they have faced in the past. Many pupils arrive feeling demotivated by their previous experience of school. Some have not been in school for some time. Leaders and staff work hard to build up pupils' self-esteem and social skills. They also support pupils to catch up on any learning that they may have missed.

The curriculum is ambitious and covers a broad range of subjects. Staff and therapists help pupils to become more self-aware of their feelings and emotions. Pupils are supported to devise strategies that help them to manage their behaviour. The new behaviour and achievement approaches are contributing well to leaders' effective work. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions, as well as for their learning. Pupils, supported by adults, learn to reflect when things go wrong and find ways to avoid a recurrence. These approaches support pupils to develop a positive attitude in lessons. They learn to work hard and behave well.

Staff make effective use of assessment to plan and cater for pupils on an individual basis. They identify what pupils know and where they have gaps in their knowledge. They use this information to plan a bespoke programme of learning for each pupil.

The new curriculum team gives careful thought to what pupils are expected to know and remember in the different subjects. Leaders and staff use well-sequenced plans

and resources to teach pupils new knowledge. In relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), for example, pupils are taught about managing feelings. This is then developed further when pupils learn about risk and personal boundaries. This helps pupils to understand the differences between appropriate and inappropriate forms of physical and other contact.

When pupils join the school, many find it hard to read fluently. Leaders have rightly made the teaching of reading a key priority in the curriculum. Staff use a well-planned phonics programme. Every day, pupils have phonics and reading lessons and staff read to them for pleasure. Pupils practise their reading regularly with an adult in school. The books that they read are matched to the sounds that they have learned. They also take home other matched books for further practice. This helps pupils to develop a love for reading and, with targeted support, pupils catch up quickly. Over time, they become fluent readers. They learn to use appropriate intonation when reading aloud and develop their reading skills well.

Teachers and support staff are confident and skilled in teaching reading and mathematics. This is because they have had high-quality training in these curriculum areas. In some other subjects, such as art and geography, teachers have not had similar quality training. This means that, sometimes, teachers do not have the subject expertise to ensure that pupils gain deep knowledge in all subjects.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of opportunities to promote their personal development. All pupils participate in several enrichment activities. These range from cooking to playing musical instruments. Recently pupils entered a local art competition. Staff encourage pupils to learn about different countries and to help other people. For example, pupils recently enjoyed being able to represent different countries in a mini marathon that raised funds for an overseas leukaemia charity. Staff have impartial conversations with pupils and their families about future secondary school options. Leaders plan, once the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions allow it, to invite guest speakers into school to talk about their jobs and professions.

Leaders are very considerate of staff's well-being. Leaders give staff access to a range of support, for instance counselling supervision. Leaders take effective steps to ensure that staff's workload is manageable.

The proprietor body and members of the local governing body communicate a shared vision. They strive to give a fresh start to primary pupils who have found learning hard in their previous schools. The proprietor body and governors visit the school regularly. They make sure that the premises are maintained to a good standard and comply with health and safety regulations. They also hold leaders to account for the school's educational performance and make sure that staff have the resources that they need to cater for pupils' needs and aspirations. Leaders fulfil the statutory guidance for RSHE. Their accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor body has not been thorough enough in ensuring that the school meets all the independent school standards. Inspectors found that the proprietor

body had not fulfilled their obligations for some reporting to the local authorities that fund pupils' places. This matter was rectified right away once inspectors brought it to their attention. All independent schools with pupils aged 11 and above are required to provide suitable changing and shower facilities. The school's premises do not meet that requirement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and vigilant. They know the pupils and their needs. Staff meet daily to discuss all pupils. They are quick to inform leaders of any changes in pupils' circumstances or behaviour that may raise possible concerns. Leaders refer pupils who need additional help to internal therapists and external agencies promptly. This means that pupils get the support they need to secure their safety and well-being.

Leaders have put in place appropriate vetting procedures when appointing new staff.

Leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy is published 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)

- In some subjects, the expertise of teachers and support staff is not as strong as it needs to be. This means that staff are not fully equipped to help pupils deepen their knowledge effectively in all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders should support and guide staff to gain secure knowledge and expertise in all the subjects that they teach.
- The proprietor body has not been vigilant enough in monitoring the school's compliance with all the independent school standards that are relevant to the school's registration. This means that not all standards were met at the time of this inspection. The proprietor body needs to ensure that suitable changing and shower facilities are provided for pupils, as set out in the registration requirements. Leaders should make sure that they have suitable arrangements in place to check that the school is consistently compliant with all of the independent school standards.

How can I feed back my views?

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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

Unique reference number	145849
DfE registration number	304/6007
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10216242
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Proprietor	UP–Unlocking Potential
Chair	Stuart Roden
Headteacher	Gary Hawkins
Annual fees	£48,000 to £64,000
Telephone number	020 3325 2772
Website	www.thecornerschool.org.uk
Email address	info@thecornerschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 February 2019

Information about this school

- This was the school's second standard inspection. The first standard inspection took place in February 2019.
- The school had a material change inspection in July 2019. It extended the registered age range from five to 11 to five to 12.
- 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 by a range of local authorities.
- Since the previous standard inspection, there has been a large turnover of staff, including leaders. The headteacher took up the post in November 2020. The current teachers who plan the curriculum all joined in autumn 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

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.

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

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the chair of trustees and another trustee, the chief executive officer and the chair of governors. They also spoke with the local authority designated officer and leaders responsible for safeguarding and health and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents and policies and toured the school site to check compliance with the independent school standards.

- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. They took account of the three responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and telephone conversations with two parents and carers. They also considered 13 responses to the staff survey and five responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Cartlidge

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.

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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