

Inspection of Woodside School

25 Ravensdale Avenue, London N12 9HP

Inspection dates: 28 and 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

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?

Pupils are happy, safe and well looked after. Over time, leaders have built strong professional relationships with pupils. Leaders have made the curriculum more accessible. Pupils' complex needs are better taken account of now than has been the case, but there is still more work to do.

Staff encourage pupils to communicate and to engage with their learning. They help pupils to convey their feelings through visual images and gestures. Teachers provide a range of fun activities. They give pupils choices so that they are more willing to be involved in their learning. Pupils learn how to treat each other with respect and to be kind. They use social stories to understand no hitting or kicking. As a result, there have been no incidents of bullying since the school opened.

Pupils are well prepared to lead independent lives. They learn about relationships, living in the wider world and health and wellbeing. Pupils visit local shops and cafes. They pay for their purchases. Each week pupils visit a care farm. They learn how to look after animals and to grow plants. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities in the tuition centre and the care home. These include arts and crafts, baking and playing with puzzles.

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

Leaders have planned a broad curriculum. It includes literacy, numeracy, horticulture, animal care, arts, crafts and life skills. These subjects are taught through the lens of personal, social and health education. Pupils practise yoga and take part in physical activity in the spacious garden area.

The curriculum has been a work in progress since the school opened. Leaders have made adaptations as they have got to know pupils better. However, they did not assess pupils' complex learning, communication and social emotional needs at the start of their time at the school. This made planning a bespoke curriculum difficult. The curriculum does not break down pupils' learning into small enough steps of progress. Pupils' individual targets are not reviewed often enough. They are not typically shared with all staff.

Teachers use signs, symbols, and photographs to familiarise pupils with the alphabet and simple words. Teachers read aloud to pupils to develop their engagement with language.

Staff have worked hard to improve pupils' behaviour. Many pupils have had difficult experiences of school in the past. They have missed significant periods of time in education. At Woodside, pupils have been able to build relationships with staff based on trust. This helps them to take part in learning for longer periods. Their attendance at school has increased to one hundred per cent this term.

The school works well with external agencies. Staff have received training from pupils' educational psychologists. They work closely with social workers, occupational and speech and language therapists. They engage with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Pupils benefit from this collaboration.

Pupils learn how to stay healthy, how to eat well and how to keep themselves clean. They have learned about equalities at a level they can understand. Pupils recognise that people are the same but also have differences. They learn how to regulate their emotions through yoga and mindfulness. Pupils use deep breathing as a strategy to stay calm. Leaders encourage pupils to have quiet reflection time in the sensory room.

Staff respond to pupils' talents and interests. For example, they encourage pupils to bake or to play with Lego. Leaders have organised swimming trips and visits to the cinema. Pupils go for walks in the community. Leaders have started to prepare pupils for transition to their next steps. They teach pupils about the different jobs people do and help them with college applications. However, this is on an ad-hoc basis rather than as part of a coherent sequence of learning about careers.

Leaders are hardworking. They are committed to providing a high-quality education for pupils with complex needs. They ensure that the independent school standards are met. The proprietor has provided a calm, clean and spacious environment in which pupils live and learn. Staff workload has been a challenge this year. The proprietor plans to address this. He will appoint more teachers for the new school year in September.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training in how to recognise safeguarding concerns. They understand the mechanisms for reporting. Leaders work closely with the children's home, social workers and CAMHS to keep pupils safe. Pupils' personal risk assessments are thorough. These ensure pupils are safe in school and while on trips and visits. Teachers use social stories to educate pupils about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils learn about the potential dangers of road traffic and strangers. Leaders ensure that they carry out the necessary checks on staff, so they are safe to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Currently, the curriculum does not take accurate account of pupils' needs in the key areas of learning. Leaders need to research and implement strategies for assessment. These should be used to gather baseline information when

pupils join the school. Leaders should use this information to plan a curriculum that better meets pupils' complex needs.

- Leaders have started to prepare pupils for their next steps. However, they do not have a coherent plan for the teaching of careers at a level pupils can access. Leaders must develop a plan for implementation from September 2022 so that pupils have ample time to consider their next steps.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	148155
DfE registration number	302/6019
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10226766
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent Special School
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	Less than 5
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Mahesh Kotecha
Chair	Mahesh Kotecha
Headteacher	Katerina Cahill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 to £90,000
Telephone number	07956351971
Website	www.woodside-school.co.uk
Email address	mark@sevahomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Woodside school is a small independent special school for up to 15 pupils between the ages of 8 and 18. It is in the London Borough of Barnet.
- The school provides education for pupils with an education, health and care plan, specifically for those with autism spectrum disorder and complex learning difficulties.
- The school is in its first year, having opened in August 2021. The school does not have a religious ethos.
- The proprietor is Seva Childcare Limited, who also run two local care homes. Children start in the care home, Greenview house and then attend Woodside school.
- Pupils are taught in a local tuition centre and at a care farm. Some of their education takes place in the care home.
- The school does not make use of 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 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the head of school who is also the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, and met with the teacher. They looked at pupils' education and health plans and annual reviews.
- Inspectors considered the small number of responses to Ofsted's staff surveys. They looked at the feedback the school has received from parents, pupils, and social workers.
- Inspectors toured the site. They scrutinised a range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards. This included checking the school's admissions register, risk assessments, attendance information and safeguarding training.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor to discuss leadership and management.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

Jo Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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