

# Helen Allison School

Longfield Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0EW

**Inspection date**

15 November 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned this emergency inspection because of concerns raised about the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The safeguarding policy is informed by the latest statutory guidance. The policy is published on the school website. Leaders provide suitable safeguarding training for staff, supplemented by regular staff briefings about pupils' safety and welfare. This ensures that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and clear about their roles and responsibilities. Leaders ensure a strong culture of vigilance and care for pupils at the school.
- The designated safeguarding leads work collaboratively with staff, pupils and parents to review safeguarding and health and safety procedures. They maintain detailed safeguarding records. Leaders are diligent about ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met effectively. The designated safeguarding leads liaise regularly with local authorities and work constructively with agencies, such as social care.
- Leaders ensure that all staff recruitment checks are completed. The single central record is well maintained and up to date. Key staff have attended safer recruitment training and are well qualified in safeguarding.
- The proprietor body has ensured that an appropriate behaviour policy is in place. The policy includes a suitable range of sanctions and rewards. There is a consistent and well-established behaviour management programme in place. Staff focus primarily on identifying and reducing potential triggers for poor behaviour. Leaders and staff work well with pupils and parents to ensure that behaviour support strategies are precisely matched to each pupil's individual education, health and care plan (EHC plan) targets. This means that pupils are well supported and learn positive strategies to help them deal with any situation that may be challenging for them. The school has a policy of using 'de-escalation and distraction' strategies. As a result, there is hardly any use of restrictive physical intervention. Pupils say that they feel safe and trust staff.

- The anti-bullying policy describes the school's anti-bullying strategies clearly. Leaders keep detailed information about any incidents, including responses and any follow-up actions. Leaders use this information continuously to review and improve the effectiveness of provision. Most pupils told the inspector that there is hardly any bullying in school and that this is a 'safe place where everyone feels welcomed'. They know about different types of bullying and about how to report concerns. Pupils are accepting and appreciative of individual differences. Leaders and staff have created a kind, nurturing and welcoming ethos.
- The written risk assessment policy is fit for purpose. It identifies a range of potential risks and includes guidance about reporting accidents. Risk assessments are completed for a wide range of activities and situations, including, for example, school trips and the use of specialist equipment in practical activities.
- Leaders and staff use risk assessments very well to ensure pupils' welfare. They make sure that all individual pupil risk assessments are completed in a timely manner. Risk assessments include clear timelines and actions to reduce risks. They are shared with pupils, parents and with pupils' placing local authorities. Leaders ensure that any risk assessment reviews consider individual pupils' EHC plan targets.
- Staff establish trusting and respectful relationships with their pupils. High staffing levels ensure that pupils are well supervised at all times.
- Leaders make sure that fire safety policies and procedures are followed consistently. Fire exits are clearly identified, and fire routes are kept clear. Emergency lighting and fire alarms are checked regularly. Staff complete regular fire safety training and are well informed about fire procedures as a result. Pupils know how to respond in the event of a fire.
- The school has a comprehensive first-aid policy that is regularly reviewed. Staff who administer first aid are well trained.
- The school maintains admission and attendance registers in accordance with DfE guidelines.
- The independent school standards (the standards) that were inspected in this part are met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- The proprietor body, headteacher, leaders and governors demonstrate suitable knowledge, skills and expertise. Leaders use their secure knowledge of the independent school standards to ensure that all aspects of the welfare, health and safety standards are consistently and continually met over time.
- Leaders are ambitious for their school. They are committed to providing high-quality education and pastoral care for all pupils. Leaders are committed to promoting pupils' well-being and welfare, as well as their safety.
- The school continues to meet these standards.

## **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 that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	118993
DfE registration number	886/6046
Inspection number	10260558

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	11
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	National Autistic Society
Chair of trustees	Steve Ladyman
Headteacher	Adam Wadey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,041 to £89,384
Telephone number	01474814878
Website	<a href="http://www.autism.org.uk/helenallison">www.autism.org.uk/helenallison</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:helen.allison@nas.org.uk">helen.allison@nas.org.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	8 to 10 June 2021

## Information about this school

- Helen Allison is a special school run by the National Autistic Society. All pupils have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and have an EHC plan.
- The school is situated on two sites on the same road, the main school and The Hub. The Hub caters mainly for older pupils.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.

- The school uses Rowhill School to supplement the curriculum for a small number of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- This was an emergency inspection carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills act 2008. The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education as a result of a complaint about pupils' welfare, health and safety. The inspection was carried out with no notice.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with all independent school standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the quality of leadership and management.
- Not all of the independent school standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding leads and senior staff. She also met online with representatives of the proprietor body and the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with pupils and staff.
- The inspector checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. She also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Parent View**

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022