

The Sybil Elgar School

The National Autistic Society, Havelock Road, Southall UB2 4NY

Inspection date

11 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) and 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent government guidance. It clearly reflects the context of the school, setting out how pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) affect safeguarding practice and policy. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. This is thorough and tailored to pupils' needs, including those who cannot communicate verbally. Leaders have implemented an online system that staff use to record any concerns. Leaders are immediately aware of any concerns recorded by staff and take swift action. They also hold weekly meetings to discuss any cases of concern.
- Leaders work closely with other agencies, including the local authorities who place pupils in the school, to make sure that pupils and families get the help they need. This includes support from services such as social care and housing.
- Pupils feel safe. They are generally relaxed in school. They can recall the names of the adults who support them. Those who find verbal communication difficult have visual supports to help them to make themselves understood. This helps them to let staff know if they are worried about anything.
- These independent school standards are met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 14

- There is an appropriate written behaviour policy in place which is implemented well at the school. The staff team includes clinicians from a range of disciplines who work very well together to analyse pupils' behaviour. They work out why pupils behave in the way they do, for example whether there is an unmet sensory need. Each pupil has an individual plan setting out behaviours they may exhibit, identified triggers for this behaviour and a range of strategies staff can use to address the behaviour. These plans are discussed and reviewed regularly. Staff work well together to support pupils.

- Staff deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour calmly and as a well-established team. They provide pupils with resources that help them to become calm, such as cushions and fidget toys. Staff are well-trained in strategies to manage difficult behaviour, including physical intervention. Physical intervention is seen as a last resort. Staff are trained in these techniques should they be required.
- When incidents of difficult behaviour occur, these are recorded in an online system and analysed by leaders. Any follow-up actions are also recorded. Regular meetings between leaders, clinicians and class staff ensure that there is a consistent approach to behaviour management for each pupil.
- Pupils are supervised by confident and competent staff proportionate to their age and the time of the day. Pupils receive consistent responses because staff are well trained and knowledgeable about the pupils they support.
- These independent school standards are met.

Paragraph 11, 13, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have ensured that appropriate and relevant written policies are in place relating to health and safety, first aid and risk assessment. These are implemented well.
- Both school sites are safe, secure and clean. Leaders make sure that all the relevant health and safety checks are undertaken and recorded clearly. They deal with any issues that arise. The business manager, who oversees site maintenance, works closely with the lead psychologist to ensure that all aspects of risk assessment are considered and mitigations put in place. This includes risks relating to site maintenance, to pupils' SEND, and to trips and visits. These systems are embedded and well established.
- An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid. Any injuries to staff or pupils are recorded and followed up. Written first-aid logs include injuries to both staff and pupils. It is not clear whether the report refers to a pupil or a member of staff. Arrangements for the management of medication and dietary requirements are suitable.
- These independent school standards are met.

Paragraph 15

- A robust admissions process ensures that all the required information is recorded when a pupil joins the school and when they leave, including details of their next placement. The admissions record meets requirements.
- Pupils' attendance and absence are recorded accurately. Leaders follow up on any absence daily. These procedures are well embedded.
- These independent school standards are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) to 34(1)(c)

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards checked on this inspection are met. Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being and welfare in all that they do, taking pupils' SEND into account at each step.

- The school principal and her leadership team know the school, its staff and pupils extremely well. They ensure that robust systems are in place to check that the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor body has established a complex system to oversee leaders' work. A local governing body contributes to the oversight of the school, with the chair of governors meeting regularly with the principal. The proprietor has also set up some organisation-wide systems and boards which oversee different aspects of the school's work. In addition, leadership at governance level is in a period of transition with new trustees and directors coming into position. School leaders are providing experienced and steady leadership during this period of change.
- The independent school standards in this part are met.

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

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|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 101953 |
| DfE registration number | 307/6064 |
| Inspection number | 10259473 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School status | Independent special school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 22 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 89 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 28 |
| Proprietor | National Autistic Society |
| Chair | Stephen Ladyman |
| Principal | Chloe Phillips |
| Annual fees | £56,424 to £84,504 |
| Telephone number | 020 8813 9168 |
| Website | www.autism.org.uk/sybilelgar |
| Email address | sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk |
| Dates of previous standard inspection | 5 to 7 October 2021 |

Information about this school

- The Sybil Elgar School is an independent day school for pupils who have autism spectrum disorders and other complex needs. It is situated on two sites. The second site is at Mill Hill Road, Acton W3 8RR.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans, and are placed at the school by a number of local authorities.

- The school's most recent standard inspection was in October 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), the registration authority for independent schools. This was in response to concerns being raised with the DfE relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the supervision of pupils, health and safety and leaders' management of risks. There were also concerns raised about leadership and management.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- Inspectors met with the school principal and other senior leaders. They toured both school sites and observed pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, risk assessment, governance, and the school admissions and attendance registers. They also looked at behaviour logs, health and safety checks, and first-aid records.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and pupils both formally and informally. Inspectors considered 11 responses to the staff survey.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the National Autistic Society, the proprietor body.

Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gary Rawlings

His Majesty's Inspector

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