

Inspection of Spa School Camberwell

150 Southampton Way, London SE5 7EW

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Everyone works together to make sure that pupils are happy, safe and getting ready for their future.

The school environment is carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. There is a consistent and well-organised approach to classroom set-up and the school day. This helps pupils to concentrate on their lessons and make progress through the curriculum. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. When pupils do need help to manage their feelings, this is done in a calm and consistent way.

Pupils like their lessons and the teachers and other adults that help them. They say that bullying is not a problem at the school and that they know who they can talk to if they have any worries. Leaders are quick to follow up any incidents of unkind behaviour.

All pupils who attend the school need extra help and support to develop their communication and interaction skills. The curriculum helps them develop these important areas, as well as promoting their academic achievement. Overall, the curriculum is well designed to help pupils learn.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum which focuses on developing pupils' social and communication needs as well as their progress in academic subjects. Pupils revisit key information to help this stick in their long-term memory. Teachers check carefully what pupils know and remember.

Many pupils at the school are still learning to decode text. Leaders have made sure that an appropriate, structured programme is in place to help them read fluently as quickly as possible. Staff have received training in phonics. Teachers check that pupils are making progress in reading and give them extra support if they need it. Leaders have made sure that reading is a priority in the school. Each class has a selection of high-quality books, which pupils take care of and enjoy reading. Pupils spend time in the school library and visit local libraries in the community.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, the curriculum is particularly well thought out and implemented. In these subjects, teachers help pupils to build up their knowledge step by step. In some other subjects, the curriculum is not planned as effectively. When this happens, the curriculum does not show the ambition seen in stronger subjects. Leaders already have clear plans to address this so that pupils can access the whole curriculum with confidence.

Leaders have established clear and positive values and expectations which permeate the school. Staff are very positive about working at the school. They say that leaders

are careful to make sure that their workload is manageable. They appreciate the training that they receive and they feel valued.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. At times, pupils need help to regulate their behaviour. Staff support pupils to become calm again as soon as possible, so that they can return to learning. Staff know their pupils very well and relationships are warm and positive.

Leaders provide a wide range of trips, visits and other activities which support pupils' personal development. For example, pupils learn how to travel with increasing independence. They go shopping in the local community and participate in sports and leisure activities. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum covers a wide range of important topics, including tolerance and respect for other people, healthy relationships and physical and mental health. Pupils learn about different jobs and careers. They also learn important knowledge and skills that will help keep them safe, such as internet safety and how to behave in public settings.

Governors and trustees have a wide range of relevant skills. At present, those responsible for governance are too reliant on information they receive from leaders. It is not always clear how governors and trustees organise oversight of the school's work between them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff at the school have received up-to-date safeguarding training. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Pupils at the school are more vulnerable because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and school staff understand this clearly.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding keep meticulous records of any concerns. They work very well with external agencies if pupils need extra help from outside the school.

The procedures to check that staff are suitable to work at the school are strong. Policies and procedures take account of current guidance and reflect the needs of the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not planned as effectively as it is elsewhere. This means that pupils do not reach their potential in every subject. Leaders should ensure that in every subject curriculum thinking sets out clearly the essential content they want pupils to learn and in what order.
- It is not clear where the respective responsibilities of the governing body and the trustees lie. Furthermore, governors and trustees are over-reliant on school leaders for information about how well the school is doing. Trustees and governors should clarify their responsibilities and strengthen their systems for holding school leaders to account for their work.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143745
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10255296
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Holly McAlpine
Headteacher	Steph Lea
Website	www.spa-education.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Spa School Camberwell is a special school for pupils aged five to 16 in the London Borough of Southwark. It is part of the Spa Education Trust.
- The school opened in September 2020. At the time of this inspection, there were no pupils in key stage 4.
- The school provides for pupils with an education, health and care plan which identifies communication and interaction difficulties as their primary need.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading, PSHE and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum

with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked at and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including science, music and cooking.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and with senior leaders, staff, pupils, some parents and the chair of the Spa Education Trust. Inspectors also met with a member of the governing body.
- Inspectors met the safeguarding lead, and scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of 23 members of staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey. They also considered 14 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and two responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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