

# Inspection of The Yellow House School

1 Alderford Street, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Essex CO9 3HX

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Inspection dates: 4 to 6 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Insufficient evidence**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils join Yellow House having had negative experiences of education. Staff take the time to understand pupils' needs prior to starting through structured home visits and taster sessions. This helps pupils and families settle well into school life.

Kindness and nurture underpin the positive relationships in this school. Pupils appreciate that staff prioritise getting to know each pupil as an individual. Their specific needs are met by knowledgeable and caring staff. High-quality support from pupils' key workers takes place during mentoring sessions. Pupils know they can trust staff to help them if they have any concerns or worries.

Pupils behave well in school. They also behave well during planned sessions in the local community, such as at the school's allotment. Pupils learn and use effective strategies to manage their own feelings and emotions. This helps them to engage successfully with their education.

Pupils respond positively to leaders' high expectations. Individualised curriculums are well matched to each pupil's specific needs. The curriculum is taught alongside a range of therapeutic approaches. This helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils are proud of the successes they experience in school.

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

Leaders have considered carefully how to design the curriculum so that pupils build on what they already know and can do. Pupils join the school at different times throughout the year. Leaders take this into account when deciding what is the most important knowledge pupils need to learn and when they will learn it.

Leaders develop staff subject knowledge through ongoing training and support. Teachers typically present information to pupils clearly. They provide activities and resources that help pupils to secure their subject-specific knowledge. Teachers enhance pupils' learning through thoughtful questions. For example, in English lessons, teachers encourage pupils to give reasons for their opinions. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of character, language and stories.

Many pupils arrive at school with gaps in their knowledge and life skills. Leaders ensure that teachers identify most of these gaps when pupils arrive. Overall, the curriculum and personal development programme effectively address many of pupils' gaps in their knowledge and skills. There are, however, instances where staff do not adapt their teaching approaches sufficiently to tackle the gaps that pupils have. Consequently, for some pupils, their knowledge and skill gaps remain.

The English curriculum has a strong focus on reading. Leaders make sure that pupils who need additional support with reading get the help they need. Pupils read a range of different books. Leaders carefully select books to inspire pupils to read. They also choose these books to purposefully introduce pupils to important themes

that support their wider development. Enrichment opportunities, such as visits to historical sites, bring stories to life for pupils. Pupils secure their understanding of characters in stories through acting out scenes such as from Macbeth, which they recently studied.

Leaders have carefully designed the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Lessons provide pupils with opportunities to learn about relevant themes and topics that impact their lives. For example, pupils learn about the dangers associated with drugs and alcohol. Pupils are positive about diversity and difference. They behave well throughout the school day and treat each other and adults with respect. Pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex-education lessons.

Pupils receive one-to-one careers guidance and support through meetings with their key workers. Staff plan actions to help pupils get to their next steps. Key workers follow up the impact of these actions to see what progress pupils have made. Leaders provide pupils with access to a range of further education providers. Leaders talk to pupils about what they need to do to secure their preferred career.

Leaders, supported by the proprietor and director, ensure that the school meets the independent school standards, including schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders support parents and carers of pupils. The carefully planned induction process helps parents to understand how their child will be helped at school. Parents are very positive about the support their children get while at school. Staff enjoy working at school. They are proud of the way they work together and the positive difference they make on pupils' lives.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. They complete all necessary checks on adults prior to them starting at school.

Staff receive helpful training to give them a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding. They are vigilant to any sign that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They raise concerns quickly and record the details accurately. Leaders are tenacious when following up concerns. They provide support within school and seek help from external professionals where they need to.

Leaders carefully design the curriculum to teach pupils how to keep safe in different situations.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- There are inconsistencies in how staff identify gaps in both pupils' subject knowledge across the curriculum and their personal development. Teachers do not always adapt how they teach the curriculum as well as they should. This means that, sometimes, these gaps remain. Leaders must ensure there is a consistent approach to identifying and then addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134398
<b>DfE registration number</b>	881/6048
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267635
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	18
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	18
<b>Proprietor</b>	Debra Pester
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Ollier
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£31,800 to £55,120
<b>Telephone number</b>	01787 462504
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theyellowhouseschool.org.uk">www.theyellowhouseschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@theyellowhouseschool.org.uk">office@theyellowhouseschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 to 6 June 2019

## Information about this school

- The school is an independent day school operated by a single proprietor. The school is located on two sites across Essex and Suffolk. The main site is at 1 Alderford Street, Sible Hedingham, Essex CO9 3HX. The second site is at 1 Nethergate Street, Clare, Suffolk CO10 8NP.
- The school offers full-time and part-time programmes. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils arrive at the school having experienced periods away from education.
- A few pupils stay on at the end of key stage 4 to complete their study in Year 12.
- The school does not currently use supply staff.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school received its previous standard inspection in June 2019, when it met all the independent school standards. At that time, the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

## 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 inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to judge the quality of the provision and determine if the school has met all of the independent school standards.
- 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: English, mathematics, PSHE and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's register of background checks for adults working at the

school, and a sample of child protection files. Inspectors also spoke with the proprietor, the designated safeguarding lead, and staff about the school's safeguarding practices.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, pupils, the proprietor, and a representative from the local authority.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the proprietor, staff, and pupils at both sites. Inspectors visited lessons, observed social times, and visited the school's allotment. Inspectors toured both school sites.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors also met with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

### **Inspection team**

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hemmings

His Majesty's Inspector

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