

Inspection of Ellern Mede School Limited

Holcombe Hill, Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7 4HX

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Before joining Ellern Mede, pupils may have been absent from school for some time or have not enjoyed school. With skilful and sensitive guidance from staff, pupils settle into this school well. Staff take time to get to know pupils, understand their needs and make them feel safe. As a result, pupils are much happier to come to school and engage again in learning. Every pupil has a key teacher, and pupils value this approach. They know that their key teacher can be their first point of call if they have any worries or concerns.

The school is ambitious for pupils in both the hospital and the Orange Tree settings. Staff in the hospital school work very closely with pupils' home schools to make sure that they do not miss out on learning. These pupils are very well prepared to return to their home school when they are ready. Pupils at the Orange Tree learn a broad range of subjects. Their learning is carefully planned and aspirational, preparing them very well for their next stage of education.

The school has created a calm and welcoming environment, with staff attuned and responsive to pupils' needs. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers, teaching assistants, therapists and counselling staff all work together to support pupils to understand their emotions and reflect on their actions, especially if pupils become anxious or distressed. Pupils really appreciate the support that they receive here.

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

The school has extremely high expectations for all its pupils. The curriculum allows pupils to develop their skills and knowledge very successfully across a wide range of subjects. This includes supporting students in the sixth form to access a broad range of A-level courses. Pupils join the school at different times and with different prior knowledge. Leaders quickly assess pupils' prior learning when they join the school. They identify and put in place appropriate adjustments to help pupils manage any worries they have about returning to school after significant gaps in their education. This plays a key role in ensuring that pupils are able to flourish in their learning.

Most pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or are in the process of having their needs assessed. Leaders have a detailed knowledge of each pupil's needs and barriers to learning. They make sure that staff are equally knowledgeable and understand the strategies that should be used to enable pupils to learn well. Teachers skilfully adapt their lessons so that pupils can access the full curriculum. Thanks to this tailored support, pupils make excellent progress through the curriculum.

Subject leaders have designed the content of their curriculums carefully. They make sure that gaps in learning are identified and filled and that pupils have the knowledge they need to study more demanding ideas later on. In English, for example, pupils study an ambitious range of books and poetry so that they are

prepared effectively for the literature they will read at GCSE and A level. Decisions about curriculum content are also informed astutely by pupils' interests and experiences at previous schools, such as which Shakespeare plays pupils may already be familiar with.

Across the curriculum, subject content is sequenced so that pupils build on their previous knowledge. For example, in Spanish, pupils are supported step by step to understand and confidently use different verb tenses. They are able to use their knowledge confidently in different contexts, for example by describing pastimes and explaining what things they intend to do in the future. Teachers use a range of assessment strategies to check what pupils know and remember. Teachers use these assessments expertly to identify any misconceptions and make adaptations to help pupils overcome any difficulties in learning the curriculum.

As part of initial assessments of pupils' prior learning, leaders assess reading. If pupils have fallen behind, effective and timely support is put in place to help them to increase fluency and accuracy. Pupils read regularly. They enjoy their visits to the school library. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading, and staff take time to learn about pupils' interests. Pupils' interests inform leaders' decisions about which books to get for the library. Leaders are passionate about motivating pupils to read.

The school is relentless in its approach to improving attendance and punctuality. Pupils' specific barriers to attending school regularly are acutely understood. Staff work closely with parents and pupils to overcome these barriers, devising bespoke strategies to support pupils back into school and the classroom. While some pupils still struggle, leaders' actions have had a significant impact on improving attendance. In school, pupils are polite and show one another mutual respect. This school is inclusive and diversity is celebrated, for example with Unity Day.

The school's provision for pupils' wider development is exemplary in that it is designed to meet the individual needs of pupils in the school. In addition to personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, all pupils also have social learning lessons. These lessons help pupils to develop their communication and language skills. There are a rich range of educational visits built into the curriculum, for example to Shakespeare's Globe theatre and the Natural History Museum. These are supplemented by local visits and in-school activities that are designed to build pupils' confidence and prepare them for life beyond the school. These visits have included a trip to a local farm as well as yoga classes in school. From Year 7 through to the sixth form, all pupils learn about careers through their PSHE lessons. Pupils and parents also have access to an online careers learning platform. Pupils have the information that they need to make choices about their futures.

The proprietor body is very knowledgeable about the school. Members bring a range of skills to the advisory board and hold leaders to account well. This includes with safeguarding and equality legislation. Strong leadership within the school and the advisory body mean that all the independent school standards are met consistently.

Staff at all levels of the school are happy to work here. Leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff feel that they can ask questions and share concerns if they have them.

Staff receive the training that they need to fulfil their roles, with additional training provided to meet individual's professional needs.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Unique reference number	135072
DfE registration number	302/6118
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10310396
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ellern Mede Schools Limited
Chair	Peter Curtis
Headteacher	Adel El-Shirbini
Annual fees (day pupils)	Ridgway Barnet £187 per day Orange Tree £36,000 to £69,000
Telephone number	020 8959 7774
Website	www.ellernmedeschools.com
Email address	adel.shirbini@ellernmede.org
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 February 2022

Information about this school

- Ellern Mede School Limited provides education for pupils admitted to the Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital for specialist treatment. This school is based at Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital, Holcombe Hill, London, NW7 4HX. On this site, the school provides education for pupils who are being treated as inpatients at Ellern Mede Hospital.
- Ellern Mede School Limited has a second site called the Orange Tree School. This is located at Oakleigh Park North, London, N20 9AR. The Orange Tree School provides education for pupils with a range of SEND, for example social, emotional and mental health needs. Nearly all pupils at this location have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's previous inspection took place in February 2022.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.

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 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 met with the headteacher, the heads of school, the chair of the proprietor body and subject leaders. Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school to check compliance with the independent school standards. They also toured the school's premises.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, art, science and PSHE. Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in other subjects such as Spanish, history and music.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at

playtimes was observed.

- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and staff workload. Inspectors looked at parent responses to Ofsted's survey.

Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Bob Hamlyn

Ofsted Inspector

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