

Inspection of Unique Children's School

1a Dukes Avenue, N10 2PS

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 March 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This school provides comprehensive care and support to its pupils, ensuring that those who have not previously been able to attend school do so regularly. Pupils appreciate the warm, nurturing environment that leaders and staff have created.

Staff and pupils value and live the aims of the school. Pupils like how their voice and views are placed at the centre of their education. The school supports pupils well to build their self-confidence, resilience and respect for themselves and others.

The curriculum is individually designed for each pupil. Expectations for pupils' learning are regularly reviewed and refined to ensure that everyone is learning successfully. Leaders and staff focus on making sure that learning is appropriately ambitious for each pupil. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in their learning.

Pupils' positive behaviour supports learning. They work well in their lessons. The school environment is calm and focused, and this too promotes learning. Pupils enjoy school and they are kept safe.

Enrichment and personal development are placed at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders want to prepare pupils for the wider world. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that they have to complete work experience, learn social skills and to take part in various educational visits. Staff work in tandem with pupils to prepare them for the next stages of their education.

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

Every pupil learns their own unique curriculum. What pupils study is ambitious, suitably broad and based upon their prior learning.

The school assesses pupils when they join to ensure that it is clear about any gaps that they might have in their knowledge. Through the carefully planned curriculum, pupils are well supported to get back on track with learning. Purposeful assessments of pupils' progression through the curriculum continue throughout their time at the school. Checks on pupils' understanding are used well to plan adaptations to teaching and ensure that, over time, pupils know and remember more.

Activities used in lessons are effective in supporting pupils to learn the curriculum. Teaching ensures that pupils develop knowledge and can recall it in the long term. Across the subjects that they teach, staff know how to promote pupils' learning. However, in some areas of the curriculum, there are instances where teaching expertise is not developed enough to enable pupils to extend and deepen their understanding.

Leaders use a range of initiatives to develop pupils' reading across the curriculum. These include, for example, making sure that the curriculum increases pupils'

understanding and use of language. Leaders also make sure that a rich range of books is available to pupils in school. This is supplemented by numerous trips to book shops and libraries. Leaders are particularly careful to make sure that texts represent pupils' interests and backgrounds. As pupils have missed periods of time in school some struggle to read confidently. The school makes sure that these pupils receive the teaching and practise that they need to get better at reading.

All pupils have an individual plan which describes how best to support their learning across the whole curriculum. Teachers follow these plans well. The plans are also regularly evaluated with the input of teachers, families, pupils and other experts. The school then adapts plans accordingly to make sure that pupils can learn consistently well.

The school has thought very carefully about its behaviour policy. It has adopted an approach that celebrates the positive. Leaders model the behaviour that they expect to see from pupils, including using appropriate language, being respectful and working collaboratively. This leads to the school being a happy and productive place, both inside and outside of lessons. Parents and carers, pupils and staff especially appreciate and praise this aspect of the school's work.

After joining the school, pupils' attendance improves over time. This is because the school works closely with pupils to establish good routines and remove any barriers to attending regularly.

Everything that the school does is shaped by leaders' aim to promote each pupil's broader development. This includes high-quality work to ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. The school has put in place a rigorous personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which is carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs. Trips and activities are planned around both pupils' interests as well as making sure that pupils have experiences that they might have missed. For instance, pupils are taken out to eat at restaurants and they are taught how to use the London transport system.

Pupils are prepared for their next steps after school. Teachers take them to visit colleges and support them with applications for sixth-form courses. Pupils also benefit from opportunities for work experience. Pupils learn about possible future careers in many different ways, including through the taught academic curriculum and in meeting with an independent careers adviser.

The governing body has only been recently formed. It has already helped the school to identify and implement new approaches to securing improvements in pupils' learning. New members of staff have been appointed to boost the school's capacity to further improve how provision can be tailored to pupils' needs. However, in some instances, the school is not giving sufficient consideration to how best to make sure that all staff have a manageable workload.

The proprietor is actively involved in overseeing the school's work. Working together with leaders, he ensures that actions taken are effective at improving pupils'

educational experience. Since the last inspection, leadership at all levels has worked hard to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards. The relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some instances, and in some subjects, teaching expertise is not strong enough to deliver the school's curriculum expectations fully. This means that pupils' understanding is not deepening as securely as it might. The school should strengthen professional development for staff so that they consistently have the breadth and depth of subject knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum consistently well across all subjects.
- At times, the school does not consider fully whether all staff have a reasonable workload. The proprietor and governing body should take suitable steps to understand the day-to-day realities of staff workload, and ensure that expectations of staff are realistic and manageable.

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	145295
DfE registration number	309/6006
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	10299237
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Hinal Patel
Chair	Sarah Gray
Headteacher	Alex Dimou
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,200
Telephone number	0208292306
Website	None
Email address	alex.dimou@uniquechildrenshome.org
Dates of previous inspection	24 to 26 May 2022

Information about this school

- Unique Children's school is a small independent school in Haringey catering for pupils aged 11 to 18.
- Pupils are placed at the school from a range of local authorities.
- Pupils often join the school after long periods of being out of education.
- All pupils have a range of complex SEND needs, including social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school had its last standard inspection in May 2022 when it was judged to require improvement. Not all of the independent school standards were met. The unmet standards were subsequently met at the progress monitoring inspection in January 2023.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the proprietor, the chair of the governing body and other senior staff.
- The inspectors also spoke with representatives from different local authorities to discuss safeguarding, the quality of education and support being provided to pupils at the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject 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 curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- 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.

- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of policies and other evidence to evaluate compliance with the standards.

Inspection team

Luke Stubbles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amanda Fraser

His Majesty's Inspector

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