

# Inspection of TreeHouse School

Woodside Avenue, Muswell Hill, London, N10 3JA

---

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

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

As pupils arrive in the morning, they bound up excitedly to their assigned smiling and welcoming adult. These caring key adults immediately engage each pupil in bespoke activities, which are carefully designed to support pupils to feel emotionally ready to begin their day's learning.

The school has a clear vision. It is determined to provide pupils with the very best all-round social and academic education that it can. The school plans and uses resources extremely well to promote pupils' learning. The individualised teaching and therapeutic provisions are also highly effective. Pupils are thus exceptionally well supported to develop the knowledge and skills that they need to lead successful and meaningful lives.

An overall purposeful atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed. Staff have the expertise to foresee and take pre-emptive calming actions when a pupil may be getting anxious. If a pupil does get dysregulated, they are expertly supported by staff to compose themselves. For example, staff take pupils for a short break and then help them return to class shortly afterwards.

Pupils have opportunities to take part in performances, like the joyful and confidence-building Christmas and summer shows. Through art activities, pupils prepare the props for these performances. External visiting workshops and music lessons also help to prepare pupils for their singing and acting roles.

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

The school has put much thought into designing a highly ambitious curriculum for all. It is meticulously focused on meeting the needs of pupils, all of whom have autism. The school is very adept at flexing its curriculum to respond to the changing needs of cohorts. It does so without compromising the rigour of the curriculum. Teaching staff work in strong collaboration with the school's therapeutic teams. They all use initial and ongoing assessments to determine the exact academic, therapeutic and health needs of each pupil. Staff use this information very effectively to set aspirational individualised targets and support plans.

Across the subjects, the school has identified the knowledge that it wants pupils to gain. For each of the three curriculum pathways, the sequenced small steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember are mapped out. From this, staff adapt the teaching, resourcing and support needed for each pupil to enable them to succeed. Staff benefit from plentiful high-quality training. This ensures that they have the expertise to deliver the curriculum and therapies very effectively. Staff place unwavering emphasis on teaching pupils how to apply knowledge and skills in practical contexts, including their day-to-day living. For example, pupils learn to apply their mathematics knowledge to shop for ingredients. They then use these in cooking lessons when learning to prepare a balanced meal.

Central to the school's work is developing pupils' communication skills, including in the sixth form. The school trains all staff in the use of a wide range of communication strategies. For example, core boards with key words and symbols are used systematically by all staff and pupils throughout the day. This enables pupils to communicate their learning and also their needs and choices, such as what they want to eat and that they need to use the toilet.

Expert staff teach phonics to those pupils for whom it is appropriate. The school has chosen its phonics curriculum carefully, adopting approaches designed to best support their pupils with learning how to read. Pupils develop their reading well and they do so with confidence. They are able to apply the right strategies to decode unknown words drawing on the sounds that they know. Generally, reading of stories has a very high profile in the school. Pupils enjoy engaging with stories. Staff use props and sensory experiences to add to pupils' enjoyment and understanding.

Pupils who initially struggle with behaviour are given expert support. Consequently, they become much more able to manage their behaviour. They learn to build resilience, confidence and independence. They also learn how to interact positively with their peers and when in the wider community. Pupils' attendance is high.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Alongside their daily movement breaks and physical exercise lessons, pupils take part in horse riding, swimming, skiing and yoga sessions. The school also takes pupils on many visits into the community. This includes, for some, museums, theatres and the cinema. The school plans activities for pupils to experience different faith and cultural celebrations. Weekly visits of an Indian musician as well as regular visits from orchestras and drama groups enhance pupils' experiences. The school also organises several career events and works with a specialist careers guidance organisation for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). From Year 7, pupils get involved in the school's enterprise project. Pupils manufacture a wide range of products for sale. For example, they make camomile tea bags, postcards from their artwork, jewellery and fruit salads. Pupils enjoy taking turns to greet customers and conduct the transactions with pupils, staff and families. Pupils also have opportunities for other work experiences. Pupils leave school with functional accreditations and are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

The board of trustees and local governing body 'play a pivotal role in ensuring that staff receive regular training. They have well-established systems in place to support and challenge the school and drive improvement. All school leaders welcome and act on feedback and recommendations from internal and external reviews of their work.

Staff work with and support parents and carers very well. They provide them with training and resources to support their children's development. This helps pupils to experience the same means of communication, therapies and behaviour management strategies at home as they do in school. Leaders have made changes to reduce staff workload. Staff very much value the specialist support that they receive for their well-being.

## 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135534
<b>Local authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323364
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	101
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	15
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of board of trustees</b>	Neil Goulden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Dziopa (head of school) Sam Newton (executive headteacher of the charitable trust)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.treehouseschool.org.uk/">http://www.treehouseschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of the Ambitious about Autism charity.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, performing arts, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They spoke with members of the charity's trust board, the chair and other local governors and the trust's chief executive officer. They also spoke with the local authority safeguarding officer.
- 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 reviewed a range of documentation, including looking at records of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also had formal meetings with staff and with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the pupil survey carried out by the school.

### **Inspection team**

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Aliki Constantopoulou

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024