

Eagle House School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	315/6081
Unique Reference Number	134594
Inspection number	329567
Inspection dates	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Eagle House School was established in 2004 on its present site in the centre of Mitcham, Surrey. It is housed in a large listed early eighteenth century building, with additional accommodation constructed at a later date. The school provides special day education for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and associated social and communication difficulties. It is registered for pupils between the ages of four and 19 years, although there are currently 71 on the school's roll between the ages of five and 15. All pupils have statements of special educational needs for Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities in London. The school expresses the aim that *'all of our pupils will have a sense of achievement, raised self esteem and will leave us with a positive attitude towards their life and learning'*. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Eagle House is a school with a number of strengths. Overall, it provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. The quality of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good. The work of the school is strongly endorsed by a majority of parents who responded to a pre-inspection questionnaire. Staff work hard to support the development of pupils of all ages and abilities. The management of the school is currently undergoing a period of change, but plans for the development of a range of aspects of the provision show a clear vision and are relevant to pupils' needs. The school is conscious of the need to consult with and support parents. Progress has been made by the school since the last inspection with respect to the regulations for independent schools and it now meets all the requirements.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. All requirements are met. Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' key skills. An appropriate range of subjects is taught, although a modern foreign language is not yet available for pupils aged 11

to 14 years. Each class has a carefully identified scheme of work and plans; however, this means that children within the same year but different groups do not explore similar themes. The school has firm plans in place to deliver the curriculum through themes later in the year. Support for listening and communicating is good overall and almost all pupils make good progress in these areas. This is because support for such development is catered for in every element of the curriculum. The well considered personal social and health education (PSHE) programme includes giving pupils small responsibilities within the school. Good links with Connexions help the school to identify further 14 to 19 programmes and college links.

Under its current acting management team, the school is in the process of redeveloping and refining its curriculum into a whole-school approach that links together its more specialist elements and therapies. A positive start has been made on this and there are already strengths in the ways in which the school seeks to make the curriculum practical and relevant so that it engages the pupils. The school is looking carefully at the range of accreditation it needs to have in place to meet the range of pupils' needs and talents and has already identified various vocational, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and Entry level courses that it will put into place. A good start has been made on developing a sensory curriculum for pupils with the most complex needs, but this is not yet consolidated across all subjects and lessons.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. In the majority of lessons seen during the inspection teaching was good. Teachers plan their lessons well. Their informal knowledge of pupils is good, particularly in relation to their behaviour management and how to support this. Therapists and teaching staff work well together in classrooms and this ensures the learning is relevant, balanced and supportive in relation to meeting pupils' needs. Good attention is given to pupils' special educational needs and teachers and teaching assistants work hard to include all pupils and make the curriculum accessible to them. Occasionally staff inexperience means that there are missed opportunities for reinforcing pupils' targets within lessons. There have been some limitations on therapy time available because of shortages of staff. The school is attempting to recruit additional support and ensure that pupils have appropriate teaching linked to their need. The need to use temporary teaching assistants has an impact because they have had less opportunity to plan with teachers. A number of teaching assistants have been at the school for a relatively short time and routines are not established. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning.

Assessment is satisfactory and has a number of strengths, but new procedures have still to be fully embedded. Teachers' notes provide some good examples of observational records, which track very small elements of development. Individual education plans (IEPs) focus on priority learning targets. New assessment strategies are beginning to helpfully inform teachers' planning. The multi-disciplinary team has established a helpful base-line profile for each child on entry to the school, but this is still to be developed fully in relation to their particular needs. The school has detailed plans to enable staff to analyse pupils' progress over time in a more holistic way and to monitor this against national and disability specific data. Appropriately detailed reports are provided for parents.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make good progress in developing their self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence. Self-esteem is raised through ongoing use of praise, encouragement by teachers and the established reward systems. It is reinforced through awards at assemblies in which there are regular presentations. Pupils' confidence is improved through regular links with the local community and by carrying out everyday activities such as crossing the road. It is promoted through a range of additional activities, such as horse riding. Most pupils show their enjoyment of learning, seen notably when they express excitement in new discoveries. They are encouraged to understand the difference between right and wrong, supported by teachers' generally good classroom management strategies, and increasingly take on responsibility for their own behaviour and learning as they progress through the school. Behaviour is good.

Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the community, through fund raising for cancer research for example. They become aware of their wider community by trips to the local library and shops, and to the local barber. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their school environment. They develop a basic understanding of public institutions through the citizenship programme as part of PSHE, through the theme 'people and us' and through visits to the school by the local fire service. Visits to the school by representatives of local Christian and Muslim communities support pupils' developing spiritual and cultural awareness; emphasis is given to the importance of religious festivals. Pupils develop a good understanding of other cultures as the school community is made up of pupils and staff from different cultural heritages. It is further enhanced through visits by musicians, including African drummers.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school now makes good provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils are very well cared for and encouraged to be healthy. This view is supported by the response of pupils. All parents, including a minority that expressed concerns about aspects of the provision, agree that their children like the school. All regulations are met and all policies and procedures are in place. In particular, those issues identified by the last inspection as requiring more attention with respect to welfare, health and safety have been improved. The school has prepared and implemented a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside school and has devised and published a three-year plan relating to the improvement of accessibility of the premises. The school gives appropriate attention to all issues associated with fire prevention. Detailed fire risk assessments are provided for each aspect of the school's accommodation, annual checks made of fire appliances and records of fire drills show that appropriate evaluations are made after each drill undertaken. However, assessments to ensure the everyday safety of pupils in each area of the school are not yet sufficiently detailed. Staff are trained appropriately in matters relating to the welfare of the pupils, for example in relation

to child-protection and first-aid. Staff checks are appropriately undertaken and recorded, including for EYFS. The school takes full advantage of the expertise of external professional agencies in providing training for its staff.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for EYFS is good and children make good progress in relation to the targets on their IEPs and behaviour plans. It makes a strong contribution to their personal and social development, for communication and early literacy, problem solving and numeracy, and in particular the ways in which they are willing to engage with others. Children make small but significant steps in all areas of learning because the staff plan the curriculum carefully around their interests and needs. Planned work supports progress well within all areas of learning and towards IEP targets.

Children quickly establish trusting relationships and careful management by staff supports them 'having a go' at activities when their natural reaction would be to shy away. Good support for their developing independence and self-help skills is supported through strong personal and social development and therapy support. Good attention is given to their personal safety and to helping children to understand about keeping healthy. Although staff are vigilant in keeping them safe, risk assessments do not always provide sufficient detail to ensure that actions to avoid risk are specific enough. Children enjoy school and attendance and behaviour are good. Staff qualifications are appropriate to EYFS and they have received training in relation to paediatric first aid. Staff ratios are high with individual support available in almost all lessons.

Accommodation for the EYFS is relatively small and this makes it difficult to organise it into different areas, but the available space is used well to provide for children's individual special needs and the required curriculum. An outside play area is available. Imminent school reorganisation is planned to free up spaces for both withdrawal and allow for further organisation of areas of learning. Good efforts are made to work with parents and share information about what children are doing on a day-to-day basis, as well as through the established reporting procedures. Reports and informal reporting systems are good. Whole school and EYFS leadership demonstrates a good understanding of what is required and what needs to be done to improve further. The EYFS leader has had recent training and has used this to improve and guide provision, seen in the reorganisation of the curriculum and in improved understanding of how children's achievement should be assessed. Good observational records are place to inform teaching and planning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Continue to develop assessment and monitoring practice throughout the school, including EYFS.
- Complete the review of the curriculum to maximise pupil opportunity.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	Eagle House School		
DCSF number	315/6081		
Unique reference number	134594		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2004		
Age range of pupils	5 - 15		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 61	Girls: 10	Total: 71
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 61	Girls: 10	Total: 71
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,540		
Address of school	224 London Road Mitcham Surrey CR4 3HD		
Telephone number	020 86877050		
Email address	info@eaglehouseschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr A Simons		
Proprietor	Mr P Conrathe and Mr M Conrathe		
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell		
Dates of inspection	10 December 2008		