

# Eagle House School, Sutton

Independent special school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	319/6074
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135801
Inspection number	345386
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Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Eagle House School, situated in Sutton, South London, provides places for students aged between 11 and 19 years who have special educational needs associated with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The school aims to prepare its young people for life beyond school through 'unlocking full potential by striving to create a school day that is motivating, rewarding and purposeful for each individual'.

This was the school's first inspection since opening in February 2009 when a number of students transferred from another of the Eagle House Group's schools in Mitcham. At the time of the inspection there were 32 students on roll with boys outnumbering girls by almost ten to one.

The school is housed in a former annexe of Stowford College with which it shares the site and which is also owned by the group. The college is due to close in July 2010 and the group then intends that Eagle House School will take over the premises in order to extend its provision. The headteacher has been in post since February 2009 and the deputy headteacher since September 2009. They currently lead and manage both schools on the site.

## Evaluation of the school

Eagle House School, Sutton, provides students with a satisfactory quality of education and good levels of support for their welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust. Curricular provision is satisfactory and continues to develop as the school becomes more established. Teaching is satisfactory but is not yet consistently well informed by assessment. Although students have been at the school for a relatively short time they make satisfactory progress overall and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The aims of the school are appropriately met and the school meets all the regulatory requirements relating to independent schools.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

## Quality of education

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory, as is the curriculum which contains all the necessary elements of the National Curriculum. It also includes a range of therapies, including speech and language therapy, and other programmes developed by an educational psychologist and occupational therapist. The strong focus upon the group's specialist ASD curriculum has a good impact upon students' personal development and communication. Curricular provision is less effective where teaching is linked to the National Curriculum.

The school provides pupils with many real-life experiences. There is an increasingly strong vocational and life-skills element which includes access to courses accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Broader life-skills activities include simulated work experience or work opportunities within school, including working in the school café. Students go into the wider community on a frequent basis and there are good links with the police and fire services. Other curricular opportunities include swimming and sports at a leisure centre and a trip to the seaside which for some was a very new, challenging and successful experience. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory and support students' progress which is satisfactory overall. Students make the most progress in their personal, social and communication development. Real strengths exist in the relationships between staff and students and in the consistency of approach to behaviour management which ensures that any disruptions to lessons are kept to a minimum. Teachers and support staff know the students very well on a personal level and good use is made of comprehensive profiles relating to students' behaviour, communication and other needs, to ensure consistency. The multi-disciplinary team make a positive contribution to students' learning and, in some lessons, good use is made of interactive whiteboards and hands-on experiences to develop and consolidate skills. Secure arrangements are in place for baseline assessment of students' attainment levels on entry to the school and at key points in subsequent years. Long-term targets are used well to monitor and track students' progress over time but day-to-day use of assessment is in the very early stages of implementation. This means that, in some lessons, work is not pitched at exactly the right level to ensure individual progress. Lesson planning sometimes focuses too much on what students are going to do, rather than learn, so that it is not always clear that an activity is building consistently on their prior learning. Consideration of individual levels and needs is evident in some lesson plans, but in practice this sometimes means an activity being supported, and occasionally taken over, by the learning support assistants.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. They show their enjoyment of school by their good attendance and in their increasing willingness to engage with others and to try new things. Students gradually learn the difference between right and wrong and begin to consider the effect their actions may have on other people. Given the newness of the school and the resistance that some students have to change, it is commendable that both those who transferred

from the Mitcham school and those who started in September have settled so well. Consistent use of approaches to meeting the needs of students with ASD helps them to settle in class and develop positive attitudes to learning. Many respond well to the opportunity to try new experiences and they join in enthusiastically during music sessions where a spiritual element is evident. Students develop a growing awareness of other people's lives and cultures through the use of themed activities such as making African food and playing and listening to African drumming. Students from different backgrounds and cultures work well together. Students joined with those from a neighbouring school to raise money for the Haiti earthquake appeal through baking and selling cakes. They demonstrate good knowledge of local services and public institutions in their regular visits to the library and supermarket. They also benefit from trips to London landmarks, such as the London Aquarium. The newly established Café d'Eagle has proved popular and gives younger students the opportunity to evaluate and offer suggestions for improvement, such as 'scrambled egg should be cheaper'. Through experiences such as these, students are given the opportunity to contribute positively to the school community and develop the independence and resilience which will help them in future.

Students' behaviour, given the particular nature of their needs, is good. Although some find it hard to conform to expectations, the consistency of approach forms part of a positive and encouraging ethos to which students gradually respond. As a result, the occasional verbal or physical reactions to stress cause minimum disruption to the calm atmosphere which pervades the school.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. This is acknowledged by a comment from one parent who wrote, 'The school is helping him grow in many ways, e.g. confidence, independence and he is very well supported.' Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to safeguard students' safety and welfare, including annual training on child protection. The school has robust procedures for tackling incidents; records show that staff are aware of how to deal with these and record them appropriately.

The quality of supervision is very good and students' reactions to staff and each other show that they feel safe. Staff's enthusiastic involvement with the students at breaktimes engages them well in healthy exercise which is enjoyable and fun. Relaxed and shared mealtimes steer students as far as possible towards a healthy and balanced diet, although a few find it hard to lose their preference for particular foods. They are sensitively guided towards an awareness of other aspects of healthy living, including acceptable attitudes to sex, drinking and drugs. The 'Girls Aloud' club offers the very few girls an opportunity to consider issues which are particular to them. Fire procedures and risk assessments for educational visits are employed well. First aid policies and procedures meet the regulations.

The school has developed an accessibility plan which complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school keeps the required single central register and checks all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Members of the Eagle House Group board are also included in the register appropriately.

## School's premises and accommodation

The premises provide a safe and attractive environment for effective learning. Some limitations which exist with regard to specialist facilities for design and technology and science are currently addressed by the use of Stowford College, which the school hopes will be part of its provision in future.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The organisation provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information on its website and there is an informative prospectus. The reporting system, which includes annual reviews and reviews for children who are looked after, helps parents, carers and local authorities to be informed about students' progress. A few parents feel that day-to-day communication between school and home could be improved. The school is aware of this and is considering how its already sound systems could be improved further.

## Procedures for handling complaints

Procedures for dealing with complaints are available and are compliant with the regulations.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards)(England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- increase the number of lessons in which students make good or outstanding progress:
  - by ensuring that lesson objectives always make clear what students will learn, rather than what they will do
  - by making consistent use of on-going, in-class assessment of students' learning and progress.

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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## School details

Name of school	Eagle House School, Sutton		
DCSF number	319/6074		
Unique reference number (URN)	135801		
Type of school	Secondary special school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	23 February 2009		
Age range of pupils	11-19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 29	Girls: 3	Total: 32
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 29	Girls: 3	Total: 32
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,095		
Address of school	95 Brighton Road Sutton Surrey SM2 5SJ		
Telephone number	020 8661 1419		
Fax number	020 8770 0488		
Email address	admin@eaglehousesutton.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Tom Coulter		
Proprietor	Eagle House Group		
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI		
Dates of inspection	10-11 March 2010		