

Southover Partnership School

Kingsbury Manor, 288 Kingsbury Road, Roe Green Park, London, NW9 9HA

Inspection dates 28–30 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- Leaders have high expectations and give strong support to staff in this improving school.
- Pupils enter with low attainment and histories of broken education. They make rapid progress that brings success in their learning.
- Pupils gain external accreditation from Year 8. By the time they leave, there is an expectation that they will have GCSE or other worthwhile qualifications.
- Sixth form provision is good. Students benefit from the time to develop independence and life skills as well gaining further qualifications.
- The emotional development of pupils is also monitored carefully. Individual support enables pupils to show sustained progress. Behaviour is transformed and pupils show pride as learners in school.
- All adults are committed to the success of the pupils. Strong relationships help pupils to do well.
- The environment is safe as well as supportive. Close working with other professionals helps ensure that safeguarding arrangements are exemplary.
- Good support for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development builds self-confidence. It helps pupils understand the importance of getting on with people who might be different from themselves in modern Britain.
- Teaching is at least good and is key in engaging pupils in learning. Individual programmes are developed well and teachers and support staff work closely and effectively together.
- Teachers are held to account for their work, but are also given good professional support in developing their expertise. They are an effective team.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The leadership of some key subject areas, although developing rapidly, is not fully effective in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the work.
- Staff lack opportunities for developing links with mainstream schools to help develop their expertise.
- Some marking and questioning of pupils in lessons is not always as good as the best in the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- Nine lessons were observed across the four sites used by the school. Eight were observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, headteacher, the deputy heads with responsibilities for each of the sites, and with the head of the organisation that supports vocational provision.
- There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey to make an analysis. The views of parents and carers were, therefore, gathered from the school's own questionnaire. The views of a parent who contacted the inspection provider ahead of the inspection were also taken into account and a sample of parents and carers were contacted by telephone to gain their views.
- The views of staff were gathered from a questionnaire and from discussions held during the course of the inspection.
- Discussions were held with pupils at each site so that their views could also be taken into account. The lead inspector looked at their work during lessons and also made a more detailed scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work over time. Pupils also read to an inspector. Detailed case studies were undertaken to look at the provision made for them over time and the progress they had made.
- A range of written evidence was looked at, including information on the progress made by pupils, teachers' planning and assessment, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Cook

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Southover Partnership School is a day school for boys and girls between the ages of eight and 19 years of age. Around a third of them are children looked after by their local authority. It currently has 26 students on roll, including four who are post-16 and two who are part time.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social conditions. Many also have additional, complex difficulties that include autistic spectrum conditions, post-traumatic stress disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. All are placed at the school by local authorities.
- The school operates on four sites. Two of these were new in September 2014, including newly established provision for primary-aged pupils.
- The school first registered in August 2007 and was last inspected in November 2011. It has continued to grow and over the last year capacity has increased by 50%. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2014, together with two new deputy headteachers.
- Support for the provision of vocational education, delivered on and off site, is provided by Work Skills Learning, augmented by other providers as needed to meet individual needs.
- The school is not in receipt of pupil premium funding for the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the roles of leaders of the key subjects to:
 - ensure consistency across the four sites
 - support monitoring, modelling of good practice, training and support of other staff.
- Ensure that all teaching matches the quality of the best by:
 - always asking pupils challenging questions that really make them think hard and explain their ideas
 - making full use of the school's marking and assessment policy to include positive comments for improving work and allowing time for pupils to correct or improve their work.
- Strengthen links with local mainstream schools in order to develop:
 - training opportunities that help teachers grow in confidence in moderating and levelling work, especially that of able pupils
 - further strategies for assessing pupils' progress rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sustains the founder's clear vision of the school. He has the full support of other leaders and the staff as a whole. He leads an effective team that demonstrates a clear capacity to sustain improvement in the future. The success of the school over time is reflected in its steady increase in size. Leaders have focused on creating an effective school and maintain a careful check to ensure compliance with all of the independent school standards.
- At each of the four sites, pupils are able to learn well, supported by the effective day-to-day leadership of deputy headteachers. They ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place on each site and come together regularly as a senior leadership team to drive school improvement.
- Leadership of sixth form provision is good. Students are supported well, and closely monitored programmes form an integral part of transition arrangements. Staff are focused on supporting students to develop life and independence skills alongside their learning. This helps to ensure that students are well prepared for moving to the next phase of their lives when they leave school. Individualised learning programmes are tailored to meet specific vocational or academic routes as best fit students' plans for the future.
- As a result of the rapid growth in the school's capacity, leaders have identified the need to develop more teachers who are able to take leadership responsibility for key subjects across the four sites. This is to ensure uniformity of practice, as well as supporting training, demonstrating best practice, and supporting the monitoring of teaching in each subject area. This is already in place for English, but requires further development in mathematics and science.
- Checks made by leaders on teaching, marking and planning are effective. This work supports a robust system of appraisal that holds staff to account, whilst also supporting professional development.
- Reflective self-evaluation, to which all staff are encouraged to contribute, enables the school to prioritise areas for development. The annual performance objectives set for staff reflect not only these whole school priorities but also support individuals in developing their skills and expertise.
- Personal discussions with pupils help to develop individualised programmes that recognise the emotional and learning needs of each pupil. The school does all it can to meet a pupil's interests, creating opportunities in both academic and vocational learning that lead to a wide range of accreditation. Clear opportunities to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain are promoted in every pupil's individual programme.
- It is part of the school's vision that parents and carers are involved in the education of their children. The school's leadership works very hard to sustain positive relationships, reflected in the extremely positive comments made by parents and carers about the school. The leadership sees this wider support as crucial in sustaining families so that they can best support the learning and emotional development of their children.
- Work with other professionals is also very proactive. Close relations with staff from children's services departments and from a variety of health services, including therapy and mental health services, create good support for pupils. It also leads to exemplary arrangements for safeguarding, including detailed implementation of risk assessments.
- One very strong link is that which supports the wide-ranging and effective provision for vocational education. Leaders of the school and of the organisation work in very close harmony to ensure the widest range of provision is in place to address all the learning needs of pupils. The work produced is monitored with care and in detail, as is pupils' attendance and safety.
- Leaders are starting to look for increasing opportunities to work in partnership with local mainstream schools. The aim is to broaden opportunities for professional development and training, including issues such as looking at ways in which pupils' progress might be measured
- Links with the 11 local authorities that place pupils at the school are strong. This is reflected in the way that the school has, in the last year, developed its primary-aged provision following a local authority request.
- **The governance of the school:**

The proprietor originally established the school with a very clear vision for helping young people with very challenging behaviour to learn and to fulfil their potential. She and the other directors continue to implement this vision whilst ensuring that statutory duties are carried out, including those for safeguarding. The clear commitment to equality of opportunity includes the promotion of tolerance and respect for people of different faiths, culture, ethnicity and gender. A detailed understanding of

performance data gives a detailed and accurate understanding of the impact of the school in promoting the progress made by its pupils. Members of staff are held to account, reflected in the challenging annual objectives set for the headteacher. Finances are managed effectively and there is also an effective process for measuring the effectiveness of staff and determining their pay.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From the founding of the school, there has been a clear, specific and effective philosophy about the way in which pupils' behavioural and emotional needs are supported and met. It remains at the heart of the school's work, even as it has grown and developed in recent times. It is a model that supports individual pupils and their families, to which all staff commit themselves when they come to work at the school.
- There is powerful and compelling evidence of the success that this has had in helping pupils transform the extremely challenging behaviours they show before they arrive. It allows pupils to re-engage with learning and supports the progress they make throughout school. As a result, all gain academic qualifications as well as becoming much more positive members of their communities.
- In many cases, improvements in behaviour are supported through a very close and effective relationship with Work Skills Learning to promote on and off-site vocational learning opportunities. Pupils leave school to move on to college or work opportunities and there are examples of pupils who have gone on to university courses as successful undergraduates. Last year nobody left the school without a college or work placement lined up for them. Their initial progress in new settings is followed carefully to ensure they continue to do well.
- Carefully implemented strategies promote the highest standards of behaviour and the school creates an exceptionally positive climate for learning. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school and believe their children are being taught in a safe and secure environment where they are well looked after.
- In promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and in meeting the regulations, the quality of the support given to every pupil is instrumental in helping them to develop their social skills and awareness. This includes supporting students to develop an appreciation of life in modern Britain. Pupils become much more able to collaborate, to share and to understand the views of others. This also helps them to understand that others may have different views and beliefs from their own.
- Pupils have high attendance as a result of the extremely hard work done by the school to get them to realise the importance of coming to school. If a pupil does not attend school, which sometimes is related to wider emotional difficulties, the school effectively supports them and ensures their learning is not hindered. The same thorough approach to following through absence is adopted by the vocational education provider, who also insists on the highest standards of behaviour.
- Pupils develop a strong understanding of bullying in its different forms and why it is such a negative behaviour. Staff work relentlessly to ensure that positive social relationships mean that bullying is not an issue. There is a very clear focus on helping pupils understand the dangers of the misuse of the internet and social networking sites, including cyber-bullying.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and include detailed risk assessments of buildings, venues for trips and visits, and for pupils themselves. All regulations that support pupils' welfare, health and safety are met. Care is taken to address any risks that are revealed. Close and effective work with a range of professionals helps ensure safety in the school and home lives of each pupil.
- Child protection arrangements are extremely robust and include close liaison with other agencies involved in the safety of children and young people. The leaders at each site have done enhanced training and all members of staff are trained in child protection and restraint to ensure good practice is in place. Minutes of strategy meetings and similar coordinated planning reflects the great care to ensure that pupils are safe. This means that they feel secure at school and contributes to their ability to focus on learning.
- Clear, detailed policies support provision for first aid, fire safety and for pupils who are taken ill at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Over the four sites, the vast majority of teaching is good or better and supports pupils' re-engagement

with learning. In every class, adults create strong teams. Teachers and their teaching assistants plan and work together very closely. They show understanding and empathy for pupils with whom they work so closely, often sharing and discussing learning tasks together in classes.

- While pupils have a large say in the nature of the curriculum they follow, learning programmes have a clear focus on the study of reading, writing and mathematics. Care is taken to ensure that they are given opportunities to apply the skills they learn in wider courses that they follow, both academic and vocational. This supports the good progress they make in these areas, including opportunities to develop these skills in other lessons. At the moment, provision for computing is not as effective, in part because the school is still developing its resources following its recent expansion.
- The school is able to provide programmes that have a high focus on academic study for the most able learners, and these are well taught. The success of this is reflected in the fact that these students gain passes at the highest grades. Many will go on to academic courses in further education. When transition planning considers it best for the pupil to remain at school, provision of one-to-one academic tutoring enables this success to continue in advanced courses.
- In the sixth form, students continue to follow programmes of study that are individually negotiated. Accreditation usually takes the form of vocational, GCSE or advanced level courses. The key is that these fit the needs identified in the annual review process which look extremely carefully at transition. For some, the need to continue to gain life and independence skills means that the decision is that they stay at the school for their sixth form studies. This enables their wider social or emotional needs to be addressed so that when they leave they are well prepared for the next step in their lives.
- Generally, teachers show good skill in questioning their pupils. This helps pupils to understand the current levels they are working at, including the important task of identifying gaps in knowledge caused by earlier periods out of school. It also prompts lively discussion and helps to cement the positive relationships between adults and pupils seen throughout the school. Where teaching is not so successful, this element is not so well developed.
- Marking is undertaken regularly; it is generally done well and in line with the school policy. Sometimes, when teachers do not add comments to suggest how work might be improved and progress made towards meeting targets, it is not as supportive. Similarly, time for correction and improvement of work is not always provided in lessons.
- Planning is detailed and addresses the identified needs of each pupil. Time is set aside to allow teachers and teaching assistants to plan together and this brings positive results in the provision of effective lessons.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is reflected in the strong provision made for art and music. There are also many opportunities for reflection. There are clear opportunities to reflect on the values of our contemporary democracy. This is done within a context of helping pupils to develop their self-awareness, self-belief and self-confidence within a learning community that values people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils join the school, their attainment is low and most have large gaps in their knowledge because they have had time out of full-time education. There is an expectation that all pupils will be fully supported in order to reach their potential.
- Pupils are encouraged to gain accreditation from Year 8 onwards, starting with lower level courses that help to re-engage pupils by helping them to realise that they can be successful. By Year 11, there is an expectation that worthwhile accreditation is a stepping stone to courses in further education or in gaining employment. For those identified as more able this has enabled them to follow courses at advanced level, gaining high grades and in some cases leading to university courses.
- Since the current headteacher took up his post in September 2014, there has been an improvement in the quality of the information kept on the progress made by each pupil since joining the school. Clear evidence of progress in learning and behaviour is collected at least termly. This shows that virtually all are making expected or better progress as a result of becoming re-engaged in learning. In the few instances when this does not happen there are underlying wider reasons why this is the case.
- Because all pupils create an individual curriculum, much of the work is undertaken on a one-to-one basis. Staff and pupils work together in seeking to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning. This underpins the rapid progress that many show. Collaboration in the development of vocational education with the off-site provider creates effective opportunities to widen learning opportunities. Carefully monitored progress of pupils following their courses shows that they make excellent on-going progress, gaining a wide range of

accreditation.

- This process also means that when provision for identified groups is looked at there are no differences between the progress made, when compared to the rest of the pupils. This includes the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, who make up a sizeable majority of the school population.
- The social, emotional and behavioural progress made by pupils is also seen as an important measure of the school's success. Evidence to reflect this is collected and set beside the evidence of academic progress, creating a completed picture of the progress made by each pupil from when they first arrive. It also includes the way in which their attendance has been transformed. This is fully shared with pupils and is a source of pride for them.

The sixth form provision

is good

- In the sixth form, all students continue with their individual programmes from Year 11. The sixth form is successful in supporting and meeting individual needs. For some this will mean success in vocational learning, often gaining qualifications with high marks. At the same time, those capable of academic success can follow academic courses that lead to university places. The programmes students continue to follow are of high quality and well managed, having been well planned as part of individual transition arrangements. These enable students to continue to develop their life skills and independence, as well as supporting academic progress. Progress is monitored well to ensure that courses continue to meet individual needs. Students are therefore well placed to move on to the next phase in their lives, often in further education, as a result of the additional time they have spent in the specialist environment of the Southover Partnership School. Post-16 learning is well led.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	135373
Inspection number	454280
DfE registration number	304/6121

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special – Behavioural, emotional and social disabilities
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	4
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietor	Carol Frankl
Headteacher	Dayo Okunlola
Date of previous school inspection	November 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,800-£81,776
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