

# Inspection of Ellern Mede School

Holcombe Hill, Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7 4HX

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Inspection dates: 22 to 24 February 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

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

Leaders and staff and the proprietor are determined to ensure that pupils receive the very best support. Staff show immense care and help all pupils to thrive. Leaders prioritise pupils' medical, social and emotional needs. They work extremely closely with medical professionals and hospital staff to provide each pupil with support tailored to their needs.

Staff are ambitious for pupils' academic success. They have high expectations of all pupils. The school's curriculum is very wide ranging. The school encourages pupils' personal development strongly. Leaders organise enrichment opportunities for pupils very carefully. Pupils take part in many extra-curricular activities, including in music, art and photography.

All staff manage pupils' safety and well-being very well. Pupils are happy. Working relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Staff use personalised strategies to manage behaviour highly effectively. Pupils are safe and value the care they receive at the school. Leaders have strong systems to deal swiftly with bullying should it occur and get it to stop. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

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

Pupils study a range of subjects, including languages, art, music, psychology, philosophy and history. Staff motivate pupils to achieve qualifications, including in GCSEs and A levels. There is a 'no excuses' culture that seeks to ensure that every pupil can achieve their potential.

The curriculum builds on pupils' prior learning. Staff work closely with the schools that pupils attended before joining this school. They check on pupils' starting points, consider what pupils have already learned and identify any gaps in their knowledge. Staff use this information to tailor the next steps in each pupil's education. Leaders encourage pupils' reading by ensuring that pupils have access to high-quality reading texts.

A professional development programme for staff and their excellent subject knowledge help them to present subject matter very clearly. They go over previously learned subject content and check that pupils understand key concepts. Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary effectively. For example, in English, pupils were very confident to critically evaluate texts and discuss the use of 'Machiavellian' themes.

Working very closely in partnership with external professionals, staff consider pupils' individual needs and plan for them meticulously. They routinely discuss any challenges and identify the most appropriate strategies to use. They provide the strongest support for all pupils. Leaders and staff are quick to identify where additional specialist support may be needed.

The school is friendly, welcoming and calm, which enables pupils to settle quickly. Staff build strong, professional and trusting relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to participate positively in their education. Staff use individualised strategies skilfully that help pupils to remain focused in class. As a result, curriculum teaching is rarely ever disrupted. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent.

Staff provide pupils with extremely strong emotional and social support. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme teaches pupils about contemporary issues. This includes learning about healthy relationships, the wider community, financial decision-making and identity, including gender and sexuality.

Pupils learn about different beliefs and points of view. They explore moral issues and develop their personal and social skills. Pupils' cultural development is encouraged through opportunities to make virtual visits to art galleries, and to explore the work of artists and writers. Pupils receive high-quality support to prepare them for life beyond the school, including the career options open to them. Excellent arrangements help pupils to return confidently to their mainstream schools.

Staff are very positive about working at the school. They feel consulted and involved in decisions that leaders make. They appreciate the clarity of communication from leaders. Their workload and well-being are taken seriously.

Since the previous inspection, leadership has been further strengthened. New leaders are well supported to build their expertise. Leaders and the proprietor maintain strong oversight of statutory policies and procedures. Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are met.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a detailed oversight of safeguarding procedures at the school. They have worked closely with multi-agency groups to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers on the school's website.

Regular 'reflection meetings' with leaders help staff to consider how best to support pupils. Staff have an understanding of pupils' varying needs. They are vigilant and know how to deal with any concerns should these arise.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know that they can go to a range of adults for help, including 'key teachers', should they have any concerns.

## 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135072
<b>DfE registration number</b>	302/6118
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	10210844
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	28
<b>Proprietor</b>	Peter Curtis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Adel El-Shirbini
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£33,000 (£175 per day)
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8959 7774
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ellernmedeschool.com">www.ellernmedeschool.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:school@ellernmede.org">school@ellernmede.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 to 25 January 2018

## Information about this school

- Ellern Mede School provides education for pupils admitted to the Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital for specialist treatment. The school uses two sites: Ellern Mede Ridgeway hospital site, Holcombe Hill, London NW7 4HX, and Ellern Mede Friary Hall, Oakleigh Park North, London N20 9AR. The school started to use the Ellern Mede Friary Hall site in October 2021 when the Department for Education agreed to its use. The school no longer uses its former premises at 2 Warwick Road, Barnet EN5 5EE.
- The school provides education for pupils and students with an eating disorder condition who are treated as inpatients at Ellern Mede Hospital. Most pupils at the school have complex needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school's previous inspection took place in January 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: English, art, mathematics and PSHE education. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and took pupils' work into account. Meetings with pupils and teachers were also held to gather their views.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, the independent school standards, and pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance. The views of parents and staff were also considered, including through surveys.

## **Inspection team**

Noeman Anwar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Bruce

Her Majesty's Inspector

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