

Ellern Mede School

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

Inspection dates

23–25 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and proprietor provide excellent leadership. They ensure that teaching staff and health professionals work together exceptionally well to improve pupils' life chances.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' welfare and what they can achieve. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The professional development of staff is extremely well catered for. Staff receive high-quality training to help them support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively.
- The provision for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare is a strength of this school. Staff promote a caring learning environment where pupils are valued and grow in confidence.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Governance arrangements ensure that leaders remain focused on the key priorities to maintain high standards for all pupils and staff.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Teachers enable pupils to learn very effectively through individual timetables which take account of their health needs.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to specialist teaching and a suitable range of subjects. Pupils make substantial progress and achieve success in external examinations by the end of Year 11.
- Sixth-form provision is outstanding. Students are highly motivated to learn because they receive the same level of excellent teaching and support as younger pupils at the school.
- Leaders recognise that the use of information and communication technology to enrich pupils' learning is an area to expand.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden the range and use of information and communication technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by effective governance, ensures a culture of high expectations for all pupils. A cohesive partnership between health and educational professionals underpins this outstanding school.
- The headteacher and proprietor are aspirational for all pupils to receive high-quality education, taking into account their medical and health needs. The 'never give up' attitude shown by all staff improves pupils' life chances, enabling many to continue with their education. Parents and carers are very positive about the exceptional support their children receive and the work of the school.
- Arrangements for teachers' professional development are highly effective. Staff receive appropriate training and are competent to take on the responsibility of teaching pupils who have complex health needs. As a result, pupils receive excellent teaching and support to develop both socially and personally. Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high.
- The curriculum is academically broad and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' outcomes and personal development. It is well matched to pupils' individual needs and, wherever possible, includes the programme of study from the pupils' home school. As well as English and mathematics, the school offers specialist teaching in humanities, sciences, languages and the arts. Enrichment of the curriculum includes stimulating extra activities, such as trips to museums and visits from religious leaders of different faiths. Through this, pupils get the most out of their time at school.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely strong. For example, pupils have opportunities to debate current issues and consider different political and religious points of views. They learn about respecting others, including having regard for people with protected characteristics. This prepares pupils exceptionally well for the experiences and opportunities of life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and staff work extremely effectively with external agencies, including social workers, professionals and parents. Leaders assess and plan for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities exceptionally well, including, where appropriate, through a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. This enables pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to receive the help they need in their education.
- Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The school is likely to comply with the relevant independent school standards if the requested material change is implemented. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are likely to be suitable to meet the proposed increase in the school's capacity.
- On very rare occasions, the school admits very sick children below 11 years of age for respite and palliative care. The learning support that pupils receive is of high quality. The application to lower the age range was not included in the original material request to accommodate this group. The newly acquired building, facilities, curriculum and

safeguarding arrangements are likely to comply with the relevant independent school standards if the requested material change is implemented.

- Leaders are keen to expand the provision for information and communication technology; currently, lack of appropriate resources limits pupils' learning.

Governance

- Governance is highly effective. The recent change to form an advisory board has not altered the members' significant contribution to the life and development of the school. The advisory board checks the school's effectiveness regularly in relation to the difference the provision makes to its pupils, both academically and personally.
- Members of the advisory board are aware of their responsibilities, including ensuring that statutory requirements are met. The regular review of the school's policies, including safeguarding, ensures that policies are developed and implemented effectively.
- The advisory board has an accurate understanding of the key priorities and needs of the school. Members receive information about the school's performance regularly, including staffing arrangements. They use this information and their skills to provide effective challenge and support to school leaders in all aspects of school life.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Academic and health professionals work closely to create a safe culture where pupils can learn, recover and thrive.
- The safeguarding policy, published on the school's website, reflects current government guidance. It emphasises that pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. Leaders adopt rigorous pre-employment checks, including prohibition from teaching checks, to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with pupils.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and other staff are appropriately trained in the event of the headteacher's absence. Staff training to safeguard pupils is updated regularly and includes the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil or about the conduct of another member of staff.
- Arrangements to check the safety of the premises, including at the new proposed site, are evident in school records. The implementation of the first aid policy ensures that there are sufficient numbers of trained first aiders and fire marshals on either site at any one time.
- Effective engagement with parents, medical staff and appropriate external agencies ensures that safeguarding matters are dealt with quickly and effectively. Regular meetings enable teaching staff to be updated with any concerns, such as changes to pupils' health care. Written records of these meetings are carefully maintained to track the help that pupils receive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is excellent. The provision enables pupils to make noticeable achievements. This is because education and health care are so

closely interlinked, maintaining pupils' focus on their learning while giving consideration to their medical needs.

- Teachers plan learning effectively. They use their secure subject knowledge and information from the pupils' home schools to plan very effective individualised learning. This is well suited to pupils' age, health needs and abilities, including for the most able, and enables them to make substantial gains in their skills and understanding. Pupils appreciate the support that they receive.
- Teachers are highly skilled and encourage pupils to learn in a calm and purposeful way. Carefully designed resources and questioning techniques characterise the exceptional teaching across a range of subjects and key stages. Pupils are developing excellent English, mathematical and scientific skills as well as exploring new talents in creative subjects, including the arts.
- There are excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers understand pupils' needs and their high expectations enable pupils to engage or to regain their interest in learning. Teaching provides pupils with a sense of normality, in spite of the individual challenges that some pupils may face. For example, teaching sometimes occurs at a pupil's bedside or on the hospital ward to maintain continuity in their educational programme.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is highly effective. Teachers use daily records of pupils' achievements, both academically and personally, to set targets and support further learning. Pupils appreciate this and respond by working hard and with interest.
- Effective partnership between parents and teachers (known as key teachers) makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and development. Regular information and guidance enable parents to know how well their child is doing. Parents are extremely appreciative of the teaching their children receive.
- The availability and use of information and communication technology for teaching and learning is limited.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school fosters a caring and secure atmosphere which actively promotes the well-being of pupils and their individual health needs. Pupils grow in confidence because of the help and respect they receive from adults. Additionally, pupils' individual learning programmes help them to develop their self-worth and understanding of how to be effective learners.
- Pupils' physical and emotional needs are catered for exceptionally well. Each pupil has a key teacher who ensures that pupils' needs are met by coordinating information from health professionals, teachers and parents. Key teachers work alongside the pupils and set targets tailored to their individual needs.
- While bullying is extremely rare at the school, pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. Pupils learn about e-safety, including keeping themselves safe while using the internet and social media sites. Pupils are developing their understanding of

what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Parents, pupils and staff are confident that pupils are kept safe and are well looked after at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well during and outside lessons. When they move around the school in groups, they do so sensibly. Similarly, in lessons, teachers encourage pupils to adopt 'safe behaviours' and to consider others.
- Typically, the environment is conducive to learning. Pupils' eye-catching and creative work fills the classroom walls. This inspires pupils to do as well as they can.
- Pupils maintain impeccable attitudes towards their learning, even when they are feeling tired. Pupils are gently encouraged to try their best and take pride in their work and in their achievements.
- Disruptions during learning activities are rare. Leaders and teachers have created a positive learning atmosphere where pupils are self-motivated to learn. On the rare occasions when incidents occur, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well to ensure that they remain focused on their learning.
- The attendance of the majority of pupils improves over time. Some pupils, who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs, receive regular visits from teachers on the hospital ward. Teaching encourages pupils to explore new areas that may interest them, including music, singing and textiles, and this adds to their motivation to attend school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' outcomes are outstanding because they receive excellent individual teaching alongside and complementary to their health care.
- Most pupils make substantial progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Although some pupils join the school with gaps in their education, they catch up and make excellent gains in their knowledge. Pupils receive opportunities to explore new skills, for instance in textiles, the arts and music.
- All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, achieve extremely well because of the support that they receive. Most-able pupils make equally excellent progress because they are suitably and appropriately challenged.
- Most pupils reach high standards by the end of key stage 4 in many subjects, including in the sciences. Similarly, pupils typically progress at least as well as they did in their home school. With careful consideration of pupils' health needs, teachers help pupils to make marked gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The school prepares its pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Many pupils are successfully reintegrated into their home school to resume their education. Pupils receive effective careers guidance to enable them to successfully take up sixth-form studies, including studying for A levels.

- Comparisons cannot be made with results nationally because there are no published results for this school. Additionally, pupils remain on roll at their home school and join the school at various times throughout the year.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- There are currently a very small number of students on roll in the sixth form. Leaders and teaching staff have ensured that individualised learning programmes match the health needs, abilities and interests of each student.
- Regular liaison with the students' home schools and health professionals enables the students to continue with their sixth-form studies. Students are highly motivated to learn, because of the very effective support that they receive.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes model the same expectations that leaders and teachers have for the rest of the pupils at the school. Students receive excellent teaching across a range of subjects and courses. They have access to effective careers guidance and highly individualised advice for the next steps of their education or future lives.
- There are too few students to make an analysis of their rates of progress.

School details

Unique reference number	135072
DfE registration number	302/6118
Inspection number	10038171

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Number of part-time pupils	13
Proprietor	Ellern Mede School Ltd
Chair	Peter Curtis
Headteacher	Adel Shirbini
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,450 (£155 per day)
Telephone number	020 8959 7774
Website	Ellernmede.org
Email address	school@ellernmede.org
Date of previous inspection	8–10 October 2014

Information about this school

- Ellern Mede School provides an education for pupils admitted to the Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital for specialist treatment. The school shares the site with the hospital. Pupils are on dual roll with their 'home school'.
- Pupils and sixth-form students attending the school have severe and complex health conditions, at times associated with physical impairment. Some pupils have social, emotional and learning needs.

- Almost half of pupils and sixth-form students on roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school recently acquired a new building to increase the educational provision for up to 41 pupils. The address of this premises is 2 Warwick Road, Barnet, EN5 5EE, which is approximately 4 miles away from the main school site. The school's material request to the Department for Education includes this additional site. A hospital is situated on this site.
- The school is registered to cater for pupils aged between the ages of 11 and 18 years. Occasionally, for respite and palliative care for very sick children, pupils below 11 years of age, who are admitted to the on-site hospital, attend the school.
- The school's previous inspection was a full inspection that took place on 8–10 October 2014.
- There has been a change in governance since the previous inspection. An advisory board that governs the school replaced a governing body; the proprietor is the new chair of this board.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- At the request of the Department for Education, the inspector considered, as part of the standard inspection, the school's application for a material change to increase the school's capacity from 21 pupils to 41 pupils. The majority of the additional pupils will be based at a second site, which the school has recently acquired.
- During the inspection, the school contacted the Department for Education to request a material change for lowering the age range of pupils who are admitted to hospital and attend the school.
- School policies, a wide range of documentation, including curriculum plans, and the premises were examined on both sites to check compliance with the independent school standards, and to provide evidence in support of the material change request.
- Information was also scrutinised relating to safeguarding, including checking the suitability, implementation and publication of a safeguarding policy on the school's website, as required by the Department for Education.
- The inspector observed pupils' learning, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher, including on the hospital ward. The inspector viewed pupils' work across a wide range of subjects, examined assessment information and talked to pupils informally about the progress they were making.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the inclusion lead, the proprietor and chair of the advisory board and the head of nursing at the hospital.
- The inspector spoke formally to a group of teachers and considered the 10 responses to the Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- There were seven responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, too few to generate a report. The inspector considered three written responses from parents. Telephone conversations were held with parents to hear their views of the school.

Inspection team

Rosemarie McCarthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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