

Inspection of Cavendish School

Lady Gomm House, 58 Hawkstone Road, London SE16 2PA

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 March 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at the school after a difficult time in mainstream education. Typically, their attendance has been poor. They have big gaps in their learning. Many pupils lack confidence. Pupils appreciate the small class sizes here. They get help and encouragement from staff. Staff have high expectations of their behaviour and effort. Gradually pupils improve their attendance and attitudes to learning. They make up for lost time.

Pupils are safe and secure at school. Incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are rare. When they happen, staff act quickly to investigate and resolve any issues. This means that pupils get a fresh start every day. Staff teach pupils to look after their physical and mental health. Staff and pupils enjoy a healthy lunch together. Pupils benefit from art and emotional well-being therapies.

Through the curriculum, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in the community. For example, they learn about the dangers of knife crime. Pupils broaden their horizons through outings to places of interest, such as the Tate Modern. Leaders arrange access to impartial careers advice and work experience. All of this prepares pupils well for their next steps.

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

Pupils experience a broad curriculum. It meets the requirements of the independent school standards. On arrival at the school, pupils sit baseline assessments in English and mathematics. Subject teachers use follow up tests to check for gaps in pupils' understanding. Staff also adapt the curriculum based on the targets set in pupils' education, health and care plans. Younger pupils access the same curriculum, which is adapted to meet their individual needs. Staff work well together to ensure that all pupils get one-to-one support as needed. Older pupils follow a personalised curriculum which prepares them for external qualifications.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced. In English, for example, pupils' study of 'The Tempest' encompasses language and literature. Pupils understand how Shakespeare uses language to create individual characters. They build on this learning by writing comparisons of different characters in the play.

Teachers plan around the knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop. They revisit these often. This is important because pupils can struggle to recall prior learning. Staff check pupils' understanding of the taught curriculum. They address misconceptions in the moment. Sometimes, the checking of pupils' learning is not done regularly, including of any errors in pupils' work. This means that pupils do not build on their prior knowledge and skills effectively.

Staff model sophisticated vocabulary in their conversations with pupils. In lessons, they emphasise the subject-specific words that pupils need to know. The school ensures that pupils learn how to read. A small number of pupils follow a phonics

programme. Others need time to develop confidence and reading fluency. Staff check pupils' reading systematically. Many pupils do not enjoy reading and do not have access to books at home. Leaders recognise this. The school is developing a culture of reading for pleasure so that pupils read more widely.

Pupils focus well on their learning. Many pupils improve their behaviour and attendance at school from low starting points. They respond well to rewards for achieving one hundred per cent attendance and punctuality each week.

The school gives high priority to pupils' development beyond the curriculum. There are a range of lunchtime activities on offer. These include art, computing, board games, use of the gym and park walks. Pupils compete in sports, such as football, rugby and rowing. They are encouraged to experience working alongside different people. The school has hosted a police liaison day. Pupils met police officers, members of the riot squad and dog handling team. Pupils discuss current affairs in tutor time, especially news stories relating to issues such as county lines. The school encourages pupils' moral development. Pupils and staff organise charity events, such as their own 'Race for Life'. Pupils receive appropriate help with college visits and future applications.

The proprietor has ensured that the school continues to meet the independent school standards. The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Since the last inspection, leaders have worked with the local authority to improve the quality of education. They have recruited more staff with subject expertise. Staff recognise that school can be a challenging place to work. Despite this, they enjoy working here. Staff build rewarding professional relationships with pupils and parents. They value opportunities for their own career development. Staff feel well supported with workload. Leaders show consideration for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- There is inconsistency in the regularity and effectiveness with which pupils' learning is checked, including errors in pupils' work. As a result, pupils in some subjects do not build on previously taught subject content securely. The school should continue to focus on ensuring that assessment is systematic, regular, and helps all pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not securely read widely for pleasure. This limits their opportunities to gain knowledge across the curriculum and limits their vocabulary. The school should ensure that a love of reading is promoted for all pupils by ensuring that they have access to a wider range of high-quality texts.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	131237
DfE registration number	210/6391
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10299179
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Cheryl Stepton
Headteacher	Sara Craggs
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,900
Telephone number	020 7394 0088
Website	www.cavendish-school.org
Email address	info@cavendish-school.net
Dates of previous inspection	7 to 9 June 2022

Information about this school

- Cavendish School is an independent special day school in the London Borough of Southwark.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in June 2022.
- The school caters for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have additional and complex needs, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism. Increasing numbers of pupils also have mental health needs.
- All pupils are placed by local authorities and have an education, health and care plan.
- 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, humanities and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders and considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and a range of staff. Inspectors also met with the proprietor of the school.
- Inspectors had telephone conversations with representatives from two different local authorities.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors toured the site and reviewed policies and documents as part of checking the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sahreen Siddiqui

Ofsted Inspector

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