

Inspection of The New School

St Mary's Lodge, 149 Central Hill, London SE19 1RT

Inspection dates: 30 November–2 December 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders place pupils' personal development at the core of the school's work. When they think about the curriculum, leaders take into account pupils' previous schooling arrangements, including those pupils who have been home educated. All staff are focused on supporting pupils' emotional well-being. Staff help pupils to develop resilience and an ability to articulate their feelings. Staff work hard to help pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils get the therapeutic support they need. They particularly enjoy working with the school's therapy dog and being part of small group sessions that focus on their well-being.

Pupils are happy in school. Some pupils said that they did not like school until they joined this school. Pupils of all ages play well together at breaktimes. Pupils typically behave well. If any bullying occurs, staff sort it out quickly. Staff keep them safe. Pupils feel confident to tell their teachers if they are worried about something.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Pupils study a wide range of subjects and achieve well. The school's democratic ethos is embedded into everything that takes place. This means pupils have a say in some of what they learn about. They enjoy opportunities to build their talents outside lessons too. For example, pupils enthusiastically take part in Capoeira and 'dungeon and dragons' workshops.

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

Pupils have dedicated time to read each day. Many pupils join the school unable to use phonics well. Teachers check pupils' starting points and use the school's phonics programme to build on what each pupil knows. Pupils who are behind and any who fall behind receive additional support to help them catch up and keep up. Leaders make sure that the phonics programme is delivered consistently. It makes a positive difference to pupils' reading.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and achievements. Most subject plans set out the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders sequence this knowledge from the early years onwards so that pupils build on what they learned before. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not thought about what important knowledge they want pupils to learn. In these subjects, leaders are not clear about how pupils' knowledge builds over time, including from the early years. Leaders have plans in place to sort this out and they have started to address this.

In most subjects, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to return to and practise the things they learned previously. For instance, in mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils build their knowledge of numbers securely before moving on to more difficult concepts. Pupils go over and revise key facts so that they remember them over time. However, occasionally, teachers do not make sure that lessons build on what pupils already know and can do in the mixed-age classes.

Leaders work with pupils, parents and carers to create personal learning plans which take into account pupils' strengths and needs in different subjects and areas. Leaders and teachers check that pupils are getting better in their learning. They share this information with pupils and parents and use it to plan what pupils learn next. Leaders make sure that all staff understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide targeted support for all pupils who need it. This includes academic support and pastoral support, such as play and art therapy. Leaders work with local authority professionals when they need further advice on how meet pupils' needs.

Pupils like sharing their views in 'restorative circles'. They said this helps them to reflect on their behaviour. Pupils are confident to ask questions and share their views in lessons. Teachers address well any low-level disruption to learning. As a result, poor behaviour does not affect the delivery of the curriculum.

The programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education helps pupils to learn about people from different backgrounds and religions. For example, pupils researched people from diverse backgrounds in Britain to create presentations. Pupils decide which activities should be offered during 'Wednesday workshop' sessions. Workshops include chess, 'New School news' and touch typing. Pupils are taught about relationships and healthy lifestyles in an age-appropriate way. Leaders' plans include opportunities for secondary-age pupils to receive careers information, education and guidance.

The proprietor and trustees have the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. Trustees receive training to understand and fulfil their statutory duties. They have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards. Leaders ensure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff feel that leaders support their well-being. Staff said they can share their views and have a say in decisions that are made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in all safeguarding matters. They know the signs to watch out for that would indicate a pupil might need help and support. Staff report any concerns and leaders respond effectively to these. Leaders work with other professionals, including in local authorities, in order to keep pupils safe. Leaders persevere to ensure that families get the help they need.

Leaders make sure that adults working in the school are properly vetted. The safeguarding policy is suitable. Leaders publish it on the school's website. Trustees know their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding.

Pupils are encouraged to keep themselves safe, including online. They are taught how to report any concerns if they arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Most subject plans are sequenced logically and help pupils to build up their knowledge over time. In a few subjects, leaders have not ensured that plans make clear what important knowledge pupils need to learn and in what order. This affects how well pupils, including in the early years, build secure knowledge over time in these subjects. Leaders have started to address this. Leaders have already taken credible actions to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Sometimes, teaching does not build well on what pupils already know and can do. When this happens, some pupils do not learn as much as they could. Leaders need to make sure that lessons build securely on what pupils know and can do, particularly in the mixed-age classes.

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

Unique reference number	147986
DfE registration number	306/6023
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10204266
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Lucy Stephens
Chair	Mark Norbury
Headteacher	Dhama Sangarabalan and Callie Sharma (Co-Headteachers)
Annual fees (day pupils)	None
Telephone number	020 4513 0505
Website	www.thenewschool.org.uk
Email address	office@thenewschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The current co-headteachers joined the school in September 2021.
- This is the first standard inspection since school was registered by the Department for Education on 25 August 2020.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school ethos is focused on sociocracy and democratic principles.
- Although the school is registered to cater for pupils up to the age of 16, the current age range of pupils in the school is four to 12.
- Pupils learn in mixed-age classes throughout the school.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor, the co-headteachers and the trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and computing. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, 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 looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding records and documentation. Inspectors also spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about measures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors toured the school site and looked at documentation to check compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Andrea Bedeau, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lascelles Haughton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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