

# Cavendish School

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

## Inspection dates

1–3 May 2018

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good               |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The school leaders and the proprietor ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The school provides its pupils with an outstanding education. Pupils make excellent progress and many experience success for the first time in their school career.
- Since the previous inspection, virtually all pupils leaving from Year 11 have achieved accredited qualifications and have gone on to a college course, an apprenticeship or into employment.
- The headteacher and leadership team are driving improvement. The staff strongly support their vision for the school, and adults believe that pupils deserve nothing less than the best education possible.
- The proprietor has an excellent grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She provides highly effective challenge, as well as support.
- Senior staff check teaching regularly and very thoroughly. They use the information from this to plan high-quality training and support to help teachers improve their skills.
- Teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and use this to plan interesting lessons, which help pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Staff work very hard to help pupils to learn to manage their behaviour. They make sure that any individual difficulties are not allowed to disrupt the education of others.
- Pupils know they come to school to learn. Behaviour in lessons reflects their very positive attitudes.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe outside school and when online.
- Most pupils have improved their attendance and punctuality, but there still a few who are not convinced about the importance of regular attendance.
- The curriculum is very well matched to individual needs, particularly in the range of opportunities which widen pupils' horizons and encourage them to aim high.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school, and appreciate all that it does to give their children a fresh start.

### 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?**

- Further develop the work on improving attendance, particularly in relation to persistent absentees.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher and senior team provide outstanding leadership. They share very high expectations for what pupils can achieve, and their roles complement each other very effectively. Their work is highly effective in ensuring that the school continues to improve.
- Staff strongly support the school's ethos. As a team, they work closely with leaders to promote the school's aims. They understand how their different roles contribute to the success of the school in meeting pupils' needs. Staff and pupils work in an environment which is supportive and challenges them to do their best.
- The work with pupils and their families is excellent. Staff are willing to listen, and they provide a range of services which help parents and their children work through any difficulties and make sensible decisions. Staff are willing to 'go the extra mile' to help families.
- The school's records show that parents are highly supportive of what it is doing for their children. In discussion, parents commented on the speed and effectiveness of the communication with parents.
- Leaders regularly carry out formal and informal monitoring of teaching to assess its impact on pupils' progress. They provide very effective training and support, which enables teachers to keep up to date with changes, for example to GCSE syllabuses and assessment. The headteacher carefully monitors the use of any external provision to ensure that it is meeting pupils' needs.
- Staff have high expectations of their pupils, and take their responsibilities seriously. They reflect thoughtfully on their teaching, and appreciate the support they are given to help them improve. Teachers aim to give every pupil the opportunity to achieve well. They are justifiably proud of the fact that virtually all pupils leave with nationally recognised qualifications, a placement on a college course, an apprenticeship or they move on to employment.
- All pupils study English, mathematics, science, humanities, art, design and technology, physical education (PE) and personal, social, health education (PSHE). They also learn to cook. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visits to places of interest in and around London, which helps to broaden their horizons.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced a wide range of projects in music, drama and film-making. These are popular with pupils, and teach them a range of skills as they write, perform and film their own productions.
- The curriculum is further extended by the work undertaken through the association with Millwall FC Community Programme and other local organisations. This gives pupils access to high-quality sports coaching and nationally recognised qualifications, as well as opportunities for work in the local community. Despite its small size, the school competes successfully with other schools. The football team recently represented Southwark in a London-wide football competition.
- The school prepares students extremely well for life in Britain through PSHE, work-

related learning and careers education. These promote equality of opportunity and encourage respect for and tolerance of others. In PSHE and tutor time, pupils learn about how democratic institutions work, the importance of the rule of law and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. This is supported by work in other subjects, for example the work in history on the rise of fascism.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor is exceptionally knowledgeable about the school. She is determined to provide a high-quality education which helps pupils to overcome the issues which prevent them from learning and from experiencing success.
- The highly effective working relationship with the headteacher and staff ensures that the proprietor can challenge and support the leaders both in relation to pupils' progress and their personal development.
- The proprietor ensures that school buildings are fit for purpose, and that classrooms are suitable for teaching. The school has little outdoor space, but benefits from well-supervised access to local outdoor space during the school day.
- The school's website keeps parents and carers well informed. It prominently displays helpful advice and guidance for parents and staff on safeguarding, and gives parents good information on the curriculum and other policies.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy meets current requirements and is updated regularly. It sets out clear guidance for staff, and staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. All staff receive regular training and updates, often daily at staff meetings.
- The proprietor and leaders ensure that all staff are checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Safeguarding records are detailed, and sensitive information is kept secure. The school works effectively with a range of other professionals and agencies, including the police and local authorities, to help keep pupils safe.
- A culture of vigilance permeates the school because leaders ensure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff keep a close eye on pupils to ensure that any potentially unsafe behaviour is swiftly dealt with and not allowed to escalate into something more serious. Leaders make promoting pupils' welfare a very high priority.
- The school works closely with other organisations to help pupils learn how to stay safe. The local Community Police Officer is a regular and welcome visitor. Recently pupils attended a safeguarding workshop at Millwall FC Community Trust, which dealt with serious and live issues such as knife crime, which pupils may have to face outside school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- Teaching across the curriculum is outstanding and pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Former pupils have gone on to more advanced qualifications up to and including university entrance.

- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and almost all have an education, health and care plan, which identifies the sort of support they should be receiving to meet their particular needs. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Teachers use the information they have about pupils' needs and their prior attainment to plan suitable lessons and activities. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils help to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge well to extend pupils' learning and help them quickly develop positive attitudes. Although it is still a challenge for many pupils to overcome a legacy of underachievement, they respond very well to skilful teaching.
- Across the school, teachers and support staff are highly consistent in their use of school policies to manage behaviour and encourage positive attitudes to school and learning. This gives pupils a sense of security, and the confidence to try harder with their work.
- The importance attached to developing pupils' language and literacy skills is very evident. For example, in science, pupils could confidently explain the meaning of the specialist vocabulary relating to how light travels. Good use of probing questioning helps to check pupils' understanding and develop it further. This encourages pupils to contribute in lessons, and make gains in their knowledge and skills.
- In English, pupils are encouraged to read different types of books and plays, and explain their responses orally and in their written work. This helps to improve their reading and comprehension skills, and they start to catch up rapidly. The weakest readers receive highly effective one-to-one support. This is enabling them to make excellent progress, particularly in phonics, so that they can read unfamiliar words easily. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also receive additional support if they need it.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and make excellent progress. The emphasis is on helping pupils to develop confidence in using mathematical knowledge and skills so that they can apply these successfully to problem solving. The most able pupils take GCSE mathematics, as well as the entry-level examinations.
- Pupils particularly enjoy sports studies and art lessons. The excellent work on display in the Shaw Gallery shows how well pupils have developed a range of skills using different techniques and materials. In sports studies, expert teaching enables pupils to reach a good standard in different sports and fitness activities, and to go on to take recognised sports qualifications.
- Teachers and support staff work in a very effective partnership to promote high expectations and maximise the opportunities for pupils to make progress. Learning support assistants challenge and support the pupils with whom they work exceptionally well because they fully understand their pupils' needs.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Excellent relationships between adults and pupils contribute well to pupils' outstanding personal development and their welfare. Adults maintain friendly relationship with pupils, while ensuring that expectations are consistent and high. Pupils know what the

boundaries are and that they will be supported if they are going through a particularly difficult time.

- The staff work hard to gain the trust of pupils and they, in turn, feel valued and that their views matter. This is particularly important because pupils usually join the school with a history of difficulty in forming trusting and stable relationships. They have often had long periods out of school.
- Leaders and staff place great emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Staff understand pupils' needs exceptionally well and put in place highly effective individual support. This means that pupils are able to make rapid gains in their ability to manage their own behaviour. As a result, they also make rapid gains in the knowledge and skills they need for their future lives.
- Pupils receive excellent personal and careers guidance from their tutors, other staff and specialist careers advisers. This helps them to raise their aspirations and to know what they need to do to, for example, gain the qualifications needed to study law or start an apprenticeship in the construction trades or work in sports coaching and leadership.
- Leaders and all staff are excellent role models. They treat pupils with respect and demonstrate the attitudes and behaviour they expect. Pupils respond well and learn to treat others with respect.
- School surveys and discussion with pupils did not indicate any particular concerns over bullying or racism, and pupils are confident that issues will be dealt with quickly.
- All staff show a high degree of care and concern for pupils, while, at the same time, expecting them to respond well and pushing them to work in a productive manner. For example, pupils had to concentrate and show attention to detail in art and in mathematics when applying their knowledge to increasingly complex problems.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school is orderly and well organised. Staff ensure that the breakfast club, break and lunchtimes are relaxed and friendly occasions, which help pupils to develop social skills. They also use these occasions to chat to pupils informally about how well they are doing and what their needs may be.
- The school's approach to working with pupils, often on a one-to-one basis, helps pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour. The use of different therapies, including art therapy and pet therapy, is very successful. When incidents of poor behaviour occur, these are well managed and not allowed to disrupt the education of other pupils.
- Leaders work very closely with families and external agencies to improve attendance. The introduction of an electronic system has helped to develop a more rigorous approach to monitoring pupils' attendance. For example, the quicker identification and follow up of the pupils most at risk has helped to bring about a significant improvement in attendance.
- Persistent absence has declined, but staff know there is more to do in this area. Staff are working on developing more strategies to convince these pupils, and often their families, of the benefits of regular attendance.
- Leaders ensure that the code of conduct is consistently applied, so that pupils know

exactly what is expected of them and the consequences of both good and poor behaviour. The emphasis is strongly on promoting positive attitudes, and pupils value the reward system which encourages them to work and behave well. The success of this is seen in the rapid improvement in pupils' behaviour.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- When pupils join the school, most have very significant gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result of consistently high-quality teaching and support, pupils start to catch up quickly, and over time, they make outstanding progress across the curriculum.
- In English, mathematics and science, virtually all pupils successfully complete entry level examinations. These provide them with a good foundation for further study at college or an apprenticeship. The most able pupils can take GCSE examinations in these subjects and in art. It was evident in discussion with pupils that most of them are ambitious. They quickly start to understand that the better they do at school, the more likely they are to be able to achieve their goals.
- Pupils make outstanding progress, often from low starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics. They have frequent opportunities to read widely across the curriculum and, as a result, many pupils develop a real interest in, and love of, reading. In mathematics, acquiring a secure grasp of basic skills helps pupils to tackle progressively more difficult work.
- The information from teachers' assessments indicates that pupils are making very strong progress from their different individual starting points. The standard of work in pupils' books confirms current assessment information. This progress is a result of very effective support which is tailored to meet pupils' learning needs, whether related to the requirements of their education, health and care plans or their academic progress.
- As a result of effective support and the close attention paid to pupils' social and emotional health and well-being, pupils make excellent progress across a wide range of subjects. The regular checks on their progress show little difference between the achievement of different groups. For example, pupils in the care of local authorities and those who speak English as an additional language do equally well.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 131237   |
| DfE registration number | 210/6391 |
| Inspection number       | 10026284 |

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 Special School   |
| School category                     | Independent school   |
| Age range of pupils                 | 11 to 16   |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 32   |
| Number of part-time pupils          | 0  |
| Proprietor                          | Cavendish School Ltd   |
| Chair                               | Cheryl Stepton   |
| Headteacher                         | Sara Craggs  |
| Annual fees (day pupils)            | £27,000  |
| Telephone number                    | 0207 394 0088  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.cavendish-school.org">www.cavendish-school.org</a>           |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:debbie.s@cavendish-school.net">debbie.s@cavendish-school.net</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 4–5 December 2013  |

## Information about this school

- Cavendish School opened in 2000 in the London Borough of Southwark as a co-educational school for pupils aged 11 to 16 who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have additional and complex needs, including attention deficit hyperactivity and autistic spectrum disorders. The school aims to provide a safe and secure environment in which all pupils can have a fresh start and achieve success both academically and in their personal development.
- The school is registered to take up to 48 students and there are 32 currently on roll, almost all of whom are boys. Almost all have an education, health and care plan. The



school takes pupils from several London boroughs.

- Pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. Many pupils have been out of full-time education for some time prior to joining the school. All have had significant disruption to their education.
- The school makes use of the expertise of some alternative providers such as local colleges and Millwall FC Community Trust.
- The previous inspection of the school was in December 2013.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one inspector.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspector toured the site and checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered but account was taken of the school's own regular surveys of parents and the inspector met two parents. Nineteen staff questionnaires were considered.
- The inspector met school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, several pupils and the proprietor. Telephone conversations were held with representatives from two of the local authorities who place children in the school.
- Documents reviewed included the school's self-evaluation and development plans, curriculum planning and assessment files, examination results, information about pupils' destinations on leaving school, samples of pupils' work, policies and procedures and attendance records.

## Inspection team

Grace Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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