

Inspection of Pathways School

All Saints Parish Hall, Shrewsbury Avenue, Kenton, Harrow HA3 9LX

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at school and typically engage well in their learning. Staff get to know each pupil and are very understanding of their individual needs. They are vigilant to any changes in mood or behaviour. This helps to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Pupils are well behaved. This is because staff maintain high expectations and model these consistently to pupils. Any issues are identified and dealt with promptly.

Pupils follow an ambitious and highly personalised curriculum that prioritises language, communication and independence. Staff understand pupils' likes and interests and tailor the teaching of the curriculum to take account of these. This means that pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning. Pupils develop knowledge and skills securely and this is clear in their work, which is of good quality. They are well prepared for their lives beyond school.

Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy a range of rich wider experiences. For example, pupils celebrate different occasions and events, such as the recent coronation, World Book Day and Eid. Leaders are planning the school's first sports day this summer. Pupils are looking forward to this and the chance to win medals.

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

The curriculum is broad, ambitious and highly personalised. It has been designed to take into account pupils' interests and support their wide-ranging needs.

Leaders quickly establish pupils' starting points. This information is used effectively to design and sequence an appropriate curriculum that builds cumulatively towards achieving clearly defined end points. For some pupils, this will include attaining relevant qualifications.

Leaders use the information within pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to set appropriately demanding key targets. They identify the small steps that pupils need to practise and embed. While leaders maintain close oversight of the curriculum for each pupil, there are occasions where the curriculum expectations are not shared in full with staff. This means that, in some cases, tutors are inconsistent in their understanding of what pupils need to learn and when.

The curriculum has been designed to prioritise important life skills. For example, when learning about maintaining good oral hygiene, pupils practise brushing their teeth and using mouthwash with increasing independence. Similarly, pupils spend time in their local community developing their understanding of road safety and buying things in a shop.

Pupils' progress against their personalised targets is regularly reviewed. Staff check for understanding by close observation of pupils' actions, expressions and body

language. This is then used to identify suitable next steps. Pupils are given ample opportunity to revisit and practise important ideas and skills. This not only deepens their understanding but allows them to develop greater independence in their learning. This means that the curriculum that pupils are following is ambitious for their needs.

Pupils' ongoing language development and communication are central to the curriculum. Therapists provide advice and guidance to teachers, who skilfully incorporate this into the delivery of the curriculum. Staff are well trained to develop different types of communication, including through pictures, symbols and words. As a result, pupils develop confidence in expressing their views, and communicating with others in different ways.

Leaders actively develop pupils' love of books. Teachers select texts that will interest pupils. Social stories are used to consolidate learning experiences, such as visits to the local area. Developing pupils' awareness of phonics is incorporated purposefully into sensory activities. For example, pupils learn and practise initial sounds when tracing, typing or writing different letters.

Pupils benefit from rich experiences as part of their curriculum offer. These include opportunities for horse riding, swimming, music therapy and dance. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is focused on the important ideas that pupils need to learn. These include understanding different emotions. Pupils learn how to recognise their own feelings before understanding the emotions of others. The programme for relationships and sex education gives due regard to statutory guidance.

Pupils typically attend well. Leaders keep appropriate attendance and admissions registers. Leaders follow up on any absences and provide support to families, when needed, to improve attendance. Pupils behave well. This is because staff take every opportunity to model and reinforce the positive behaviours that they expect of pupils. The curriculum also builds in opportunities for pupils to learn about and develop positive behaviours. For example, tasks and activities are planned to teach pupils about how to work together and how to take turns.

Leaders, including members of the proprietorial board, have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths. This means they have identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. The proprietorial board understands its statutory responsibilities. The board is confident and skilled in supporting leaders and holding them to account for the school's effectiveness. As a result, the school meets the independent school standards.

Leaders have ensured that appropriate policies are in place. However, on occasion, practice and routines in school do not align with the information and guidance set out in the school's policies.

Staff appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They find leaders approachable. Leaders have ensured that staff receive the training that they need to fulfil their roles and responsibilities well.

Two new classrooms have been added to the site. These provide appropriate and useful additional teaching spaces. Leaders intend to expand pupil numbers gradually over time. This is to ensure that they can adapt to the increasing number of pupils and staff while ensuring that pupils' needs continue to be well met. Leaders also have appropriate plans in place to manage breaks and lunchtimes with increasing numbers of pupils and staff. All of this means that the school is likely to continue to meet the independent school standards if the proposed increase in pupil numbers is approved by the registration authority.

The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders have ensured that staff are appropriately trained to recognise and report any concerns that they may have. When concerns arise, leaders respond in a timely and appropriate way. Leaders know which external agencies they can draw on for advice and guidance when required.

Pupils' ongoing safety is prioritised through the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the importance of consent and how to communicate when they feel uncomfortable or worried. Staff model clear boundaries to pupils. Signs around the school help pupils to understand the difference between private and public spaces.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, ensure that appropriate pre-employment checks are completed. The safeguarding policy reflects the current statutory guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The well-designed and personalised curriculum is not consistently shared with staff. Where this is the case, some tutors are unable to understand fully leaders' expectations for the sequence of learning. Leaders must ensure that staff fully understand how the curriculum builds over time so that they focus consistently on helping pupils to learn and practise important concepts.
- On occasion, practice in school does not align with leaders' policies. As a result, there are some inconsistencies in routines. Leaders, including the proprietorial board, must ensure that they check that staff apply the agreed policies so that important routines and practices are consistent.

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	149145
DfE registration number	310/6016
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10267725
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Other independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Positive Behaviour Support for Learning
Chair	Saima Ali Majid
Headteacher	Neil Jones
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000
Telephone number	0208 054 4540
Website	https://pbslpathways.org.uk/
Email address	office@pbslpathways.org.uk

Information about this school

- Pathways School opened as an independent special day school in June 2022.
- The school provides education to pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is currently registered for eight pupils.
- A substantive headteacher has been recently appointed.
- 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 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of staff.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of the proprietorial board. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority with responsibility for special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and interaction, independent living, physical health and development, and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, and looked at evidence of pupils' learning.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other areas.
- Inspectors spoke with external specialists. Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with leaders and staff.
- The views of parents, carers and staff were gathered through both discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to

approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change is implemented.**

Inspection team

Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nigel Clemens

Ofsted Inspector

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