

Inspection of Odyssey House School - Bloomsbury

45 Russell Square, London WC1B 4JP

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to this school. They are happy and they feel safe. Many pupils have not been attending school for some time when they start here. The curriculum helps them to address gaps in their learning and to prepare them for the future.

The proprietor has established a pleasant school environment which is well suited to the needs of the pupils. It is maintained to an exceptional standard. Pupils like the well-equipped school environment, and they look after it. The school is surrounded by places of cultural significance, and the school makes good use of the opportunities nearby to enrich the curriculum. Pupils use the many green spaces in the locality to participate in physical education lessons and to keep physically and mentally well.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. Pupils behave well, and they rarely disrupt lessons for other pupils. Sometimes, because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils need support to manage their own feelings and emotions. This is done calmly and professionally so that pupils return to their lessons quickly. Pupils say that bullying never happens, and if it did, they know who they can talk to about it.

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

Since the school opened, leaders, including the proprietor, have worked hard to implement an ambitious curriculum that considers the needs of all pupils at the school. The curriculum is mostly well sequenced and well laid out. This includes the curriculum for pupils who are post-16. The school has experienced several changes in leadership since its recent opening and this has been a worry for some parents and carers. Because of this context, some subjects are currently not as well developed as others. Leaders know this, have identified it in their plans and are working on it.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. A few teachers are quite new to some of the adaptations that are needed to ensure that pupils achieve their best and the school has prioritised this professional development. Staff have extremely high levels of job satisfaction and feel very well supported. Relationships between staff and pupils are very warm and positive.

Pupils who are still at the early stages of literacy are taught to read so that they can access the rest of the curriculum. There is a rigorous and sequenced approach to the teaching of reading. This curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. There are many high-quality texts in classes and around the school and these books connect closely to pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils read frequently in lessons and for pleasure.

Most pupils attend the school regularly. They arrive at school on time, and they are punctual for their lessons. Pupils behave well and treat adults and other pupils with

respect. Pupils have often experienced significant disruption to their education before they start at the school and the school adapts their approach to help pupils gain confidence and make friends. Lessons capture pupils' interests and imagination. For example, a six-week block of lessons called 'Zero to Hero' delivered together with a member of the Magic Circle helps pupils develop their social and communication skills by developing and practising a 'magic act'.

The school has rich provision for pupils' personal development. Staff know the particular needs of the pupils very well and they ensure that pupils' physical and mental well-being is a top priority. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their cultural and artistic experiences, including trips to local galleries and exhibitions, and opportunities to use local sporting facilities such as a local gym and an all-weather pitch for sports such as basketball and football. There are some opportunities to experience music, for example cello lessons and access to music therapy. Leaders are considering ways to extend participation in these activities.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils important life skills, including safe and healthy relationships, tolerance and respect for all groups of people and how to live safe and healthy lives. Pupils learn about the world of work and are supported to think about the range of options open to them after they leave the school, including apprenticeships. The curriculum supports pupils to be well prepared for their next steps and for life in modern Britain.

Staff are very happy working at the school. They feel well supported by the senior staff and the proprietor. The proprietor, through regular oversight, has ensured that all the independent school standards have been met and that the school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the key pieces of information that pupils should learn and remember are not as clearly laid out as they could be. This leads to some variation in the implementation of the curriculum and therefore pupils' build-up of knowledge and skills is less secure in these areas. The school should ensure that all curriculum content is clearly mapped out so that teachers are clear on what they should teach and in what order.

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	149566
DfE registration number	202/6008
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10322615
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Odyssey Education Services Limited
Chair	Charu Kashyap
Headteacher	Stephanie Salter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£75,000 to £112,000
Telephone number	020 3336 3593
Website	www.odysseyeducationgroup.co.uk
Email address	charu@odysseyeducation.org.uk

Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection. It was first registered in March 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- All pupils who attend the school have SEND and have an education, health and care plan which names communication and interaction or autism, as the primary area of need. Some pupils have other needs as well as their autism, including social, emotional and mental health needs.

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.

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

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.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors met with the chair of the proprietor body, who is also the chief executive officer. They also met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The lead inspector spoke to officers from the local authority where the school is located and also to an officer from another local authority which commissions places at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, PSHE and history. 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 did not reach a separate judgement about sixth form as, due to the small number of pupils on roll, this could identify a pupil.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 took account of the responses to Ofsted's confidential surveys for

parents and staff.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nell Nicholson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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