

# Inspection of Southlands School

Vicars Hill, Boldre, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 5QB

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Inspection dates: 4 to 6 February 2025

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school provides pupils with a highly engaging and enriching educational experience. Some pupils report that this is the first time they have had a positive experience in a school setting. The commitment to understanding the needs of pupils and providing an ambitious, individualised curriculum is central to the school's success. As a result, pupils achieve success and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. The annual celebration day enables individual achievements and efforts to be recognised by all stakeholders.

Due to the extremely inclusive nature of the school, pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They are proud to attend this school and appreciate the support provided to them. Ensuring pupils have a voice is a high priority, and pupils are eager to share their thoughts, feelings and views. This is captured through the work done with the school council, as well as through informal conversations.

The school places positive relationships at the heart of its ethos. Staff expertly model the expectations of behaviour, and pupils are keen to meet these. Respect and kindness are integral. A calm and supportive atmosphere is evident throughout the school. Pupils are supported well during social times to use the school's extensive grounds and equipment.

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

The school tailors its curriculum and approach to ensure that pupils flourish. Staff provide effective support to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is due to the clear and precise identification of individual pupil's specific needs. As a result of the combined therapeutic and academic offer, pupils achieve exceptionally well. The school is highly aspirational and keeps the curriculum broad for pupils so their chances of obtaining qualifications are not narrowed. Lessons in social thinking and support from the clinical well-being team supplement the curriculum offer. This is highly personalised to each pupil. In lessons, staff expertly identify any gaps or areas pupils have not grasped. They address this appropriately with targeted intervention. The school maintains strong ambitions for its pupils while continually reviewing the provision to ensure maximum impact. This aspiration continues into the sixth form, where pupils are fully prepared for life beyond the school.

Trips, visits and extra-curricular opportunities complement the school's well-designed curriculum. The school ensures that all pupils have access to these. Some activities are linked to future careers which pupils have identified they would like to pursue. The school carefully considers what information pupils need in order to make informed decisions about their future. This includes sharing entry requirements for different qualification routes as well as preparing pupils for interviews.

Since the last inspection, the school has determinedly prioritised the development of phonics. Staff understand how to deliver phonics effectively. As a result, pupils who

are learning to read are given expert support. Pupils are encouraged to read a wide range of literature and develop a love of reading.

The personal development of pupils is given a high priority. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well sequenced. Some pupils need more bespoke help to understand the world around them and the changes that they are going through. The school takes swift action to put this in place. The school's strong pastoral provision helps pupils develop their self-esteem, as well as understand their own needs. During the inspection, some pupils articulated the difference the school makes to help them to recognise their own strengths, as well as build their own confidence. The school describes this work as 'helping neurodiverse pupils to develop the strategies they need to flourish in a neurotypical world'. The school recognises that some pupils are particularly vulnerable to online risks. Staff remain alert to any indicators that this may be the case and also support pupils to understand these dangers.

The school's approach to managing behaviour is highly effective. It aids pupils' understanding of boundaries as well as the routines of school life. The support that the school offers helps pupils to feel safe and secure. Relationships are based on mutual respect. This is nurtured and modelled by staff. Pupils appreciate the school's reward system. It helps them to see that their efforts and achievements are valued. Some pupils struggle with attending school. When this is the case, the school takes swift and personalised action to assist pupils and their families.

The proprietor and governing body successfully support and challenge the school. They ensure that the independent school standards are met securely. They robustly hold leaders to account to ensure that pupils are achieving the best possible outcomes. The school's sharp focus on professional development helps staff to deliver the school's ambitious curriculum and understand pupils' individual needs. Leaders are powerful advocates for pupils. They continuously monitor and refine the curriculum, as well as the therapeutic input some pupils receive. The school adheres to schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116564
<b>DfE registration number</b>	850/6030
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10342003
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	50
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cambian Asperger Syndrome Service Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Farouq Sheikh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Priddle (Principal) Jess Holloway (Head of Education)
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£97,831
<b>Telephone number</b>	01590 675350
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cambiangroup.com">www.cambiangroup.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Southlands.Admin@cambiangroup.com">Southlands.Admin@cambiangroup.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 to 10 March 2022

## Information about this school

- The school provides full-time education for pupils aged seven to 19 years. The majority of pupils are referred to the school by their local authority and have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils have a primary diagnosis of autism.
- The school operates from a single site in a rural setting. The site is located at Vicars Hill, Boldre, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 5QB.
- The school currently uses four unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school's last standard inspection was in March 2022.

## 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the head of education and other leaders and staff. The lead inspector held meetings with a representative of the proprietor body and the governing body.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art and design and social thinking. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- 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.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

## **Inspection team**

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andy Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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