

Southover Partnership School

288 Kingsbury Road, London NW9 9HA

Inspection date 8 October 2015

Overall outcome **Unmet independent school standards identified**

Reason for the inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to concerns raised about the school's recruitment procedures.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The previous standard inspection of the school took place in January 2015, when the school was judged to be good.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and toured two of the school's sites during which he met with a range of staff with different responsibilities. A range of documentation relating to health and safety, and safeguarding, was scrutinised. This included the school's single central register of recruitment checks.
- The inspector was asked to pay particular attention to the regulations relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety, and to those relating to the suitability of staff and their recruitment.

Main findings

- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. However, it does not take account of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015)*, the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The policy does not include the procedure staff, parents or others should follow if they wish to make an allegation against the headteacher. Information about this procedure is provided to staff but is neither incorporated into the overall safeguarding policy nor available on the school's website.
- From the outset of the recruitment process, documentation makes it clear that applicants will be subject to criminal record checks. References are requested with responses being appropriately scrutinised. For example, in the case of a referee not completing the whole form, the school insisted that they complete the remaining sections. The school's documentation states that having a criminal conviction will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. However, there is no process to formally record and retain evidence of the risk assessment carried out when assessing the suitability of applicants who fall into this category.
- The required recruitment checks are carried out promptly and recorded on the single central register of recruitment checks. However, the date on which checks are made to ensure that staff have the relevant qualifications, is not recorded. Staff personnel files are maintained electronically with documentation being scanned and filed. Documentation includes criminal record checks for staff who have lived or worked outside the United Kingdom.
- The school maintains that staff with designated safeguarding roles have had the appropriate training. However, certificates to confirm their successful completion of relevant training were not available during the inspection.
- The school's behaviour policy makes clear the rights and responsibilities of staff and pupils. It makes specific reference to the positive strategies used to reward appropriate behaviour. However, it contains little information about the sanctions adopted in the event of pupils' misbehaviour. The withdrawal of privileges and 'community service' are used as sanctions, but

these do not appear in the written policy. The interactions observed between adults and pupils during the inspection were positive, including the effective de-escalation of the only case of poor behaviour seen. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded using the school's electronic 'ABC' system which collates information about pupils at each of the three sites. Events leading up to an incident and the outcome of any intervention are recorded and analysed in detail.

- The written health and safety policy does not reflect staffing changes or changes to policy since its publication. For example, the paragraphs relating to first aid say that there are no designated first aiders, although further documentation contradicts this. While numerous first aiders are listed, the school was not able to provide certificates demonstrating that staff had successfully completed first aid training.
- Checks that the fire alarm is functioning correctly are completed weekly. These regular checks are recorded in the fire log book. However, the annual servicing of fire equipment took place in September 2015 and no certificate of compliance had been received at the time of the inspection. The previous certificate showed an expiry date of July 2015. Records of fire drills at the main site were not available during the inspection.
- High adult-to-pupil ratios ensure that pupils are well supervised. Risk assessment documentation demonstrates that appropriate consideration is given to levels of supervision.
- Assessment of the potential risks posed by the premises and planned activities, on and off the site, is thorough. Individual pupils' circumstances are given careful consideration with appropriate measures instigated to reduce risks to an appropriate level. Guidance to staff involved in planning lessons includes clear advice about achieving a balance between appropriate challenge and acceptable risk.

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a), and 7(b)).
- The proprietor must promote good behaviour among pupils by ensuring that a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, among other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils' misbehaviour (paragraphs 9, 9(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(b) (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor must ensure that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy (paragraph 13).
- The proprietor must ensure that the date on which checks are made to ensure that staff have the relevant qualifications is recorded on the single central register (paragraphs 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a) and 21(3)(a)(vi)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge relevant to their role, and fulfil these responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

Jeremy Loukes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- The Southover Partnership School is a day school for boys and girls between the ages of eight and 19. The school operates on three sites, one fewer than at the time of the last full inspection in January 2015. The headquarters is located in the London borough of Brent. The other sites are located in the London boroughs of Barnet and Enfield. There are currently 31 pupils of secondary school age on roll. All pupils are placed at the school by local authorities.
- There are currently no pupils on roll who are children looked after by their local authority.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social conditions. Most have additional, complex difficulties that include autistic spectrum conditions, post-traumatic stress disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders.
- The provision of vocational education is supported by Work Skills Learning as well as other providers as required to meet individuals' needs.

School details

Unique reference number	135373
Inspection number	10007851
DfE registration number	304/6121

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Special – behavioural, emotional and social disabilities
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	3
Proprietor	Carol Frankl
Headteacher	Dayo Okunlola
Date of previous school inspection	January 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,800–£81,776
Telephone number	020 8446 0300
Fax number	020 8446 0430
Email address	info@southoverpartnership.com

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