

St Paul's

Hertford Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 8NJ

Inspection dates

2 May 2014

Reason for inspection

- This unannounced inspection took place at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). Concerns had been raised about the closure of the school due to students' behaviour and their unsafe actions.
- Past events and the current situation were examined, as well as related aspects of the school's work.

Conclusions

School closure

- The school reached a crisis point in March 2014 when students were out of control and caused a great deal of damage to school property. The situation was described as unsafe where, despite staff supervision, students could not be managed.
- It is clear that the students have been unsafe and the school was closed because of this. However, the immediate risk of danger due to violent or destructive behaviour is no longer an issue, given the school's current arrangements. With the very small numbers of students now being re-admitted into the school, and with the current high levels of adult supervision, the school is now a calm place for students to be educated.
- However, not all students on the school's roll are able to attend. This is because of concerns about the staff's ability to cope with some specific students. The local authority funding such students is seeking alternative placements. The local authority has identified that relevant agencies have been contacted in relation to some vulnerable pupils who are remaining at home at this time.
- Concerns had been identified previously by school leaders and these were discussed with trustees. The increasing complexity of student needs and a number of students being admitted at the same time were serious destabilising factors. The school did not sufficiently consider the needs of its students, did not always have adequate information on admission and accepted students without considering the overall risk and impact on others.
- Staff were not sufficiently trained to meet the increasingly challenging behaviour of students and did not have sufficient expertise to cope with their needs.
- St Paul's is not registered as a special school, although nearly all of its students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). The school is reviewing its admission criteria to best reflect the

skills of staff.

Other issues

- During the inspection, documents relating to the concerns and related areas of the school's work were discussed. Compliance with regulations was examined.

Curriculum

- The school does not comply with students' statements of special educational needs. These identify that the full National Curriculum should be provided, as well as religious education. However, the school states that it has never been able to comply with these requirements. Specialist provisions, such as therapies, identified in the statement are not always able to be provided. The students do not study music. A modern foreign language at Key Stage 3 is not taught and no religious education is provided. Science is not currently taught.
- Given the school's current situation, not all students receive full time education. Time for learning is short of the recommended 25 hours for Key Stage 4 students and students will now have been taught for less than 380 sessions during the school year.

Behaviour and exclusion

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policy has not been working and staff have not been adequately trained to meet and manage student's complex needs. Students have not accepted responsibility for their own behaviour or understood its impact on others or on property.
- The school's attendance register (which is not completed accurately) shows that a high proportion of students were excluded at any one time during the spring term 2014.

Admission register

- The school's admission register shows that students do not have admission numbers and cannot, therefore, be listed in numerical 'admission order'.
- There are many instances when a student's previous school is not identified. The acting headteacher stated that this information is not always provided.

Welfare health and safety

- The safeguarding policy has some information missing, such as the name of the designated person and when training needs to be refreshed.
- The designated person has up-to-date training at the required level. New staff, appointed since September 2013, have had a briefing on basic child protection information but have not yet had any training, even though they have been working in the school for several months. Training is planned for the future.
- Serious incidents which involve physical restraint are not always fully recorded,

especially with regard to how such incidents have been followed up.

- Safe recruitment procedures are robust and all the required checks are made on staff. The single central register was updated during the inspection to ensure that it was clear that staff had the right to work in the United Kingdom. It now meets the regulation. Checks had been undertaken; however the information had not been recorded on the register.
- All the necessary fire safety checks are carried out regularly, as required. However, the domestic, unlinked, smoke detectors in the staff room outside the main building have had the batteries removed.
- The school checks the health and safety of appliances and installations such as electricity and gas. However, a brick wall in the outside recreation area is unsafe and it was reported that loose bricks have become missiles for students to throw and break windows with.

Accommodation

- The school acted quickly to rectify the serious damage to the building caused by students. Most broken windows, door frames and glass panels have been replaced. Some rooms have not yet been fully secured.
- The school buildings are spacious, although there is insufficient accommodation for 100 students for which the school is registered. Given recent events, its capacity should be limited to 50 in total (with 30 in the main building) until the school can demonstrate its ability to provide a suitable education for students with BESD.
- The external staffroom is in poor condition with some broken panelling and rotten window frames.
- The school has an external area for undertaking physical education, although there are no changing rooms or showers provided. Leaders were unaware of this requirement.
- There is no specific provision for the medical examination of students or a suitable designated place where they can go which has a sink and is near a toilet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements

Part 1

- Ensure that curriculum policy and schemes of work are implemented fully. 2(1)
- Ensure that the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age a full time education that includes the scientific area of learning. 2(2)(a)

- Ensure that, where pupils have a statement of special educational needs, the education provided fulfils its requirements. 2(2)(e)
- Ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. 3(d)
- Ensure that teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly. 3(h)

Part 2

Ensure that principles are promoted which:

- enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law 5(a)(ii)
- encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour. 5(a)(iii)

Part 3

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. 7
- Ensure that the written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils, which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving, is implemented effectively. 9
- Ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is in place and implemented. 10
- Ensure that the written policy which complies with relevant health and safety laws is implemented effectively. 11
- Ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. 13
- Ensure that school staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils. 15
- Ensure that the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour are fully recorded. 16
- Ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. 17

Part 5

- Ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education. 23A(1)(c)
- Ensure that there is suitable accommodation for the medical 23B(1)(a)

examination and treatment of pupils.

- Provide accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a suitable toilet facility. 23B(1)(b)
- Ensure that the school's accommodation and facilities are maintained to a sufficient standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils, as far as is reasonably practical. 23C

Inspection team

George Derby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- St Paul's opened in March 2007 and is registered for 100 students, aged between nine and 19 years. The school provides places for students who have been excluded from school, are at risk of exclusion or do not have a school place. The school is part of The St Paul's Community Development Trust. The Trust has a children's centre, a nursery provider and out-of-school provision on site, with a further pre-school and other nursery providers in the locality as part of its wider work. These are all separately inspected. The school was last inspected in March 2012 when most aspects were judged to be good.
- In November 2013 St Paul's began to admit nine and 10 year olds for the first time and created a junior facility in nearby accommodation. About 18 months ago, it extended its provision and created a junior college for students from 16 to 19 years located in an adjacent building.
- Up to 50 students each year are funded by Birmingham local authority. On 21 March 2014, when there were 41 students on roll, the school closed because of serious concerns about students' behaviour and their health and safety on the school site. The local authority is now seeking alternative places for a number of students. In the meanwhile the school has provided some home tuition by school staff and work to be completed at home by students. Some students have been re-admitted and the school is operating with low numbers at present. At the time of this inspection, there were eight students educated in the main school, seven in the junior part and the post-16 students (nine in total) were on work placements.
- Although the school is not registered specifically as a special school, of the original 41 students, all but two had a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority had behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), although many had additional needs such as autism. One student is looked after by the local authority.
- The school is currently led on a temporary basis by the chair of the Trust.

School details

Unique reference number	135208
Inspection number	446134
DfE registration number	330/6115
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p>	
Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Proprietor	St Paul's Community Trust
Chair	Anita Halliday
Headteacher	Anita Halliday (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	March 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,000
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