

# St Paul's

Hertford Street, Birmingham, B12 8NJ

## Inspection dates

25 September 2014

## Overall outcome

**Independent school standards not met**

## Context of the inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring inspection visit was made at the request of the registration authority to check on the progress made by the school in implementing its action plan following the emergency inspection of the school in May 2014.
- A material change inspection was also carried out during this visit to advise the registration authority on the school's proposals to alter its designation, increase pupil numbers and widen the age range for which the school is registered. The recommendation to the registration authority for this material change application is reported separately.

## Main findings

- Following the emergency inspection in May 2014, the school drew up an action plan outlining its proposals for addressing the failings in the curriculum, teaching and assessment. This was evaluated in August 2014 and found to require improvement.

## Curriculum, teaching and assessment

- At the time of the emergency inspection in May 2014, not all students received full-time education. Time for learning was short of the recommended weekly time for Key Stage 4 pupils and pupils were taught for less than 380 sessions during the school year. In addition, the school did not comply with students' statements of special educational needs. These mostly identified that the full National Curriculum should be provided, as well as religious education. Some statements also identified that specialist provision, such as therapies, should be provided for certain pupils. The inspection found that science, music, religious education and a modern foreign language in Key Stage 3 were not taught as specified in pupils' statements of special educational needs, and that the school did not make all the specialist provision required by pupils' statements.
- The school's action plan proposed that the whole staff group would review and update the curriculum policy, and revised schemes of work drawn up. The action plan also proposed revising teaching timetables to meet recommend teaching time; the provision of a science syllabus for Key Stage 3 and identification of an appropriate qualification in science for Key Stage 4, and appointing a suitably qualified science teacher. The action plan further proposed that annual reviews of pupils' statements would be held and that the curriculum would be extended to meet individual pupils' needs. The governors' approval of the new curriculum and plans for its implementation, together with compliance with statutory requirements, would be the basis for judging the success of the school's proposals.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that the school now provides for pupils to attend full-time for the required number of sessions, and the allocated time for learning is line with recommendations. This requirement is met. However, the school still fails to make the full

provision identified in students' statements of special educational need. While science is now being taught and religious education is being incorporated into the humanities curriculum, other provision is not being made. The school's progress in implementing its action plan proposals requirement improvement because some of the standards are still not met.

- The emergency inspection in May 2014 found that staff had not received adequate training to meet pupils' complex learning needs or received adequate training to manage pupils' behavioural needs. In its action plan, the school proposed revising its policies and procedures and providing staff with training and support.
- This inspection visit found that teaching and learning policies have been revised, together those for behaviour and recording incidents. While these are being implemented, the focus of the planned training and support has been altered because of staff turnover and reduced income. Training is still required for staff, and those new to the school this term require additional support and guidance. The school reports that, while there has been a reduction in serious behavioural incidents, there remains some significant low-level disruption. The school has started to implement its action proposals but further work is required to meet these standards.

### **Spiritual, moral and social development of pupils**

- The emergency inspection in May 2014 found that pupils had not accepted responsibility for their own behaviour or understood the impact on others or on property. The school's proposals included revising the school's ethos statement, home/school agreement, behaviour policy and school rules. The success criteria included improved behaviour and support for pupils through the school council and community projects, and pupils' increased understanding of the consequences of their action.
- This inspection visit found that the school has revised its policies and is now in the process of implementing them. Issues remain with staff training, with planned provision reduced due to funding issues. There has been a reduction in serious incidents since April 2014 but the school reports quite a high incidence of poor behaviour in lessons this term by a small group of older pupils that are taking disproportionate amount of time to deal with. While observations around the school and at lunchtime showed evidence of pupils having the capacity to act responsibly, this is not consistent.
- The school has started to implement its action plan proposals but further work is needed to meet these standards.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

- The emergency inspection in May 2014 found that information, such as the name of the designated person and when training needed to be refreshed, was missing from the safeguarding policy. The school's internal training records showed that the designated person's training only needed to be refreshed at three-yearly intervals, rather than the two-yearly intervals identified in national guidance. New staff appointed since September 2013 had not had any real training in safeguarding, even though they had been working in the school for several months. The action plan proposals included revising policies and providing staff training.
- This inspection found that the school's safeguarding policy has been revised. It reflects the latest guidance and includes the names of staff designated as safeguarding leads. The updated policy is on the Trust's website. New staff have received a briefing about child protection procedures and basic level training is being provided or is planned, and the school reports that higher-level training has recently been completed by three members of the school staff. However, the school was unable to provide documentary evidence to confirm this during the inspection visit. The action plan proposals have not been effectively implemented and the

standard is unmet.

- The emergency inspection also found that neither the school's behaviour policy nor its anti-bullying policy were suited to the needs of pupils or were effectively enforced. The action plan proposals included reviewing and revising the existing behaviour policy and the structure of sanctions to be used. The school proposed reviewing and revising the anti-bullying policy in conjunction with the school council. A pupil complaints procedure would also be introduced. The school proposed to commit £25,000 to the purchase of specialist support to expedite its plans.
- This inspection found that the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies have been revised. They now reflect latest guidance and are available on the Trust's website. The behaviour policy includes both rewards and sanctions. Both the revised policies are appropriate to the needs of pupils in the school. The behaviour warning system is on display in classrooms and records are being kept of pupils who misbehave. Attendance is improving but there is a small group of pupils who are consistently late. There is some improvement in behaviour, reflecting the reduced number of pupils and the current levels of pupils' needs, but the school has identified a number of issues with behaviour that require attention. The school has not continued with the planned specialist support because of the reduction in its budget. Nonetheless, staff training is required to secure and improve the implementation of the policies. A number of staff are new to the school and some of these are inexperienced. At present, the school is relying on in-house provision to address their needs. The school has started to implement its action plan proposals but the rate of progress being made requires improvement. Further work is needed to meet these standards.
- The emergency inspection in May 2014 identified that the school's health and safety policy was not implemented effectively. The school did not comply with fire safety requirements because the batteries in the domestic, unlinked, smoke detectors in the staffroom outside the main building had been removed. In its action plan, the school proposed that staff would be trained and that regular checks would be made. The plan also included proposals to ensure that the smoke detectors in the staff room were working and regularly checked. Staff training in health and safety took place at the start of term. Many of the high priority repairs, such as those to the unsafe boundary wall, have been completed. While there are still some issues to be addressed, these are not high risk and are being dealt with systematically by the site manager. The school is making effective progress in implementing its action plan and these standards are now met.
- The emergency inspection in May 2014 found that staff were not sufficiently well deployed to ensure the proper supervision of pupils. The action plan proposed maintaining the cover system and ensuring that breaktimes, lunchtimes and taxi times were covered by a rota.
- This inspection found that the supervision of pupils has improved. This has been achieved by involving nearly all staff in supervising lunch in the dining hall and cutting down on the amount of pupils' unstructured time. In lessons, support staff work closely with teachers. This strategy has, in effect, replaced the proposals in the action plan and is effective in meeting this standard.
- At the time of the emergency inspection in May 2014, the school did not consistently record incidents and details of any follow-up action. No proposals were made for addressing this in the school's action plan. The evidence from this inspection indicates that the school has established a system for recording and analysing the sanctions imposed on pupils. The acting headteacher is analysing the patterns but there is currently a three-week delay in some staff entering information on the system. One of the reasons for this is that new staff needed to be trained. As a result, the analysis of the types of incidents and the effectiveness of the follow-up action is not secure. Further work is required for this standard to be met.

- The emergency inspection in May 2014 found that pupils did not have admission numbers and could not, therefore, be listed in numerical admission order. There were many instances when the last school a pupil attended was not listed. The action plan proposed that the admission register would be brought up to date and maintained by an administrator.
- This inspection found that the admission register is maintained electronically. The required categories of information are included and completed on the spreadsheet with the exception of the admission number; the school is using the row number on the spreadsheet template for this. As a result, the admission number cannot be included in any alphabetical presentation of the register, as required. In addition, the school is not able to provide an alphabetical list at this time. The progress made by the school requires improvement in order to meet this standard.

### **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

- At the time of the emergency inspection in May 2014, there was no provision for changing or showers for pupils over 11 years of age undertaking physical education. The action plan proposed that the school would identify a venue with showers for physical education activities. A budget had been identified for this provision.
- This inspection visit found that the school is still in the process of making arrangements for off-site physical education activities. Facilities are available nearby but these have to be hired and the school wishes to minimise the cost. The school now proposes to enrol each pupil to use the local swimming pool and to hold supervised swimming lessons there. The school has yet to make the required provision; it has not effectively implemented its action plan proposals and the standard is not met.
- The emergency inspection found that there was no specific provision for the medical examination of pupils. The school's action plan proposed to identify a suitable room that is near a washroom, bring it up to standard and provide a place for pupils to lie down.
- This inspection found that a suitable room has been equipped and furnished, and is adjacent to a washroom. The action plan proposals have been successfully implemented and the standard is met.
- The emergency inspection in May 2014 found that the proprietor had not ensured that the school's accommodation and facilities were maintained to a sufficient standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. The school's action plan proposals included making repairs to the fabric of the building, and the replacement or repair of furnishings and equipment. A list of the required works was appended to the action plan proposals. This specifically included the unsafe brick wall and staffroom issues mentioned in the report.
- This inspection found that the site manager has conducted a detailed audit of the premises and accommodation, and has prioritised the remedial work needed. Records showing that this is being tackled were confirmed by observations on a tour of the classrooms and site. The brick wall in the outside recreation area has been replaced with a stout wooden fence and the batteries in the smoke detector in the staff room have been replaced. The security of the premises has been improved and is now satisfactory. The school is effectively implementing its action plan proposals and the standard is now met.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements**

- Ensure that the curriculum policy and schemes of work are implemented fully (paragraph 2(1)).
- Ensure that where pupils have a statement of special educational needs the education provided fulfils its requirements (paragraph 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 (paragraph 3(d)).
- Ensure that teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3(h)).
- Ensure that principles are promoted which:
  - enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law (paragraph 5(a)(ii)).
- Ensure that principles are promoted which:
  - encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour (paragraph 5(a)(iii)).
- 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 (paragraph 7).
- Ensure that at 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 (paragraph 9).
- Ensure that the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour are fully recorded (paragraph 16).
- Ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).
- 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 (paragraph 23A(1)(c)).

## Inspection team

Michael Best, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Information about this school

- St Paul's opened in March 2007 and is registered for 100 pupils, aged between nine and 19 years. The school provides places for pupils 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's last full inspection was 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. This is partly funded by finance from the Department of Work and Pensions.
- Most pupils are funded by Birmingham local authority. On 21 March 2014, when there were 41 pupils on roll, the school closed because of serious concerns about pupils' behaviour and their health and safety on the school site. The local authority sought alternative places for a number of pupils. In the meanwhile, the school provided some home tuition by school staff and also work to be completed at home by pupils. Some pupils were re-admitted and the school operated with low numbers for the rest of the school year.
- Although the school is not registered specifically as a special school, of the original 41 pupils on roll in March 2014, all but two had a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority had behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, although many had additional needs such as autism. One pupil was looked after by the local authority.
- A temporary headteacher, who had previously retired, took over the school in July 2012 and led the establishment until the end of March 2014. Since then, the school has been led on a temporary basis by the chief executive of the Trust.
- The emergency inspection visit in May 2014 found that a number of regulations relating to the curriculum, the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the premises of and accommodation at the school were not met. The school submitted an action plan outlining its proposals to address these failings. This was evaluated in August 2014 and found to require improvement.
- There are currently 22 pupils on roll, all of whom attend on a full-time basis. Twenty of these are placed by Birmingham local authority; one pupil is from Sandwell and a further pupil has been admitted directly by the Trust. Nearly all pupils have statements of their special educational needs, the vast majority for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. One pupil is looked after by the local authority.
- There has been a considerable turnover in staff during the past six months and this is continuing. The current staffing includes an agency teacher and two newly qualified teachers. Since the start of this term, the Key Stage 2 pupils have been taught in the same building as those in Key Stages 3 and 4.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135208
<b>Inspection number</b>	452352
<b>DfE registration number</b>	330/6115

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 inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent other
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	22
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	St Paul's Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Coffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anita Halliday (Acting headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2012
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£16,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 4376
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<b>Email address</b>	administration@stpaulstrust.org.uk



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