

Marvel School

80 East End Road, Finchley, London, N3 2SY

Inspection dates

22 January 2015

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because concerns were raised about: leadership and management; fire safety; safeguarding; health and safety during ongoing building work; misuse of funds; premises not being cleaned; and lack of resources.
- This inspection was carried out without notice.

Main findings

- Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place but are not sufficiently robust. The policy does not have regard to the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State, *Keeping children safe in education*, April 2014. As a result, not all of the required checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff. The policy includes guidance for staff regarding the recognition of abuse and what to do if a student raises concerns. Appropriate procedures are included which relate to the specific context of this school, such as working off-site with students or working on a one-to-one basis. The policy explains what will happen if allegations are made against members of staff but it does not give information on what happens if allegations are made against the headteacher.
- The member of staff responsible for safeguarding has been appropriately trained and knows what to do if any concerns arise.
- The school moved into its current premises in September 2014 and all building works are now completed. The school is a bright, airy and attractive setting for students and staff to work in. It is well equipped, and meets all regulations with regard to health and safety, and fire safety. Appropriate risk assessments are in place. The premises are clean, secure and well maintained.
- The school maintains an admission register and an attendance register. However, the admission register does not contain all the relevant details required. In particular, the school does not include the gender of the student, and only records one emergency contact number within the admission register. In an emergency, there is no alternative number recorded through which school staff can attempt to contact the student's family. Attendance registers are completed twice daily as required. However, reasons for absence are not recorded using the relevant codes. Therefore, students attending college courses or work-experience placements are recorded as absent when they are actually participating in the appropriate educational activity planned for them. This gives a false picture regarding students' attendance.
- The school provides information for parents, carers and other interested parties through its website and a school brochure. The website, however, is not up-to-date and contains some inaccurate information such as the times of the school day and the name of the headteacher. It does not provide information regarding the arrangements for safeguarding, as required. The website provides a list of school policies which can be requested from the school if required. The school brochure has been very recently revised. It also lists policies which are available on request. These include those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety, and complaints. The brochure is bright and easy to read. However, some of the information contained is misleading. For example, it states that all members of staff are trained in behaviour management strategies. While the proprietor plans to introduce this training, it has not yet taken place. As a result, parents, carers and local authorities may be misled as to the

provision which is currently in place at the school.

- Parents and carers receive a weekly detailed report regarding their child's progress. The reports explain what activities have been undertaken each day, what progress the student has made, and recognise achievement in terms of personal development. Consequently, parents and carers are very well informed about their children's experiences at school.
- Currently, all students on roll at the school are funded by the same local authority, which purchases a set number of places to utilise as and when they are needed. The local authority is satisfied that the school provides the service it requires. Where a student requires a specific therapy or programme, the local authority checks that this is being provided.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are consistently met. Those areas requiring improvement are detailed below.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school requires improvement and must take action to meet the schedule to 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 ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- The proprietor must ensure that no person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order (paragraphs 18(2) and 18(2)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that checks are made to establish whether any member of staff is subject to any prohibition order and that the single central register includes records of these checks and the date on which they were completed (paragraphs 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 (safeguarding) are published on the school's website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c)).
- 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)).

Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, Lead inspector
Flora Bean

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Marvel School is an independent day special school catering for up to 20 students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). The school is registered for students aged seven to 18 years. Currently there are four students on roll, all of whom are in Key Stage 4 or the sixth form.
- Students are referred by their local authorities and have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The school focuses on improving students' behaviour, social skills and academic achievement. The school's mission statement is 'Dreamers, believers, doers'.
- Academus Alternative Limited has run the school since September 2013. It was previously registered under the name ASD Learning London.
- In September 2014, the school moved to its current site, which is within the Sternburg Centre. This is a community resource catering for the needs of the Jewish community in Finchley, North London. The school has no religious affiliation.
- At the school's first inspection, in June 2014, the school was judged to be good and all the regulations for registration were met. Leadership and management required improvement in order to be good.
- The proprietor is currently acting as interim headteacher until the newly appointed headteacher takes up her role in September 2015.

School details

Unique reference number	139558
Inspection number	455884
DfE registration number	302/6050

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	Day special school for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	7–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	2
Proprietor	Academus Alternative Limited
Interim Headteacher	Alex Mirza
Date of previous school inspection	10–12 June 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,000
Telephone number	02083430105
Email address	headteacher@marvelschool.org.uk

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