

# Physis Heathgates Academy

**Inspection dates** 22 April 2015

**Overall outcome** **Independent school standards not met**

## Context of the inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools to monitor the progress made by the school in the implementation of its action plan.
- The academy was last inspected in July 2013. It was judged to be adequate overall.
- Despite the academy not having any material change approved, the company (The Physis Group) opened a new site in June 2014 catering for up to three young people.
- A material change visit took place in November 2014 where a very large number of The Education (Independent School Standards) regulations 2014 were not met.
- These indicated significant weaknesses in the safeguarding of pupils, curriculum and the quality of teaching. In addition, the inspection identified failings in the academy's policies to support good behaviour and tackle bullying, in the quality of provision for safeguarding and in the information made available to parents and others.
- The academy produced an action plan in January 2015, which was evaluated in March of that year. The plan was judged to require improvement as it relied on stating intended action, rather than planning a series of actions to methodically address the failed regulations.
- This was the first visit to the academy to follow up its progress.

## Main findings

### Curriculum

- The inspection of November 2014 found that schemes of work were poorly planned, lacked depth and did not meet the criteria set out by the Department which state that they must be detailed, set out a range of topics, list resources and the opportunities taken for assessing students' learning and progress. Planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship education was particularly weak and there was little time dedicated to these subjects and activities.
- The academy now meets two of the four failed regulations relating to curriculum. A curriculum policy is in place which sets out the programmes which students will and how this work links with students' emotional and therapy targets. Leaders have developed new schemes of work for mathematics, English, science, art, religious education, the humanities, Spanish, PSHE, citizenship and design technology. PSHE is now planned with clear schemes of work and is being taught regularly. The programme includes coverage of current affairs, a calendar of events, a new assembly programme and an increased series of visits and activities which broaden all students' experiences.
- The quality and scope of some of the written schemes to allow students to learn and make progress are too variable with activities which are too easy, particularly in science, mathematics, religious education and design technology. These schemes fail to ensure that students make rapid and sustained progress across a range of subjects.

## Teaching

- The inspection also found that teachers' assessment of what students have learned was weak. Marking of their work was poor. It did not give sufficient guidance on how students could improve. There was an acceptance of students' unfinished work and no expectation that they would complete tasks set.
- Teachers and students were potentially at risk because teachers were not expected to manage students' behaviour or to undertake training in dealing with students who exhibit severe challenging behaviour.
- As a result of planned actions teachers are better able to manage students' behaviour. Appropriate risk assessments are in place which outline students' needs and how incidents should they arise are to be managed. Staff have received appropriate training in physical restraint, dealing with child sexual exploitation, self-harm and behaviour management. Much improved strategies and recording processes are now in place and used by all staff.
- Planning, although much improved, is inconsistent across key stages and subjects. There are examples of effective planning in English and PSHE. Planning is weaker in religious education, science and design technology.
- This inspection found that although there is an assessment framework with the introduction of appropriate baseline assessment of students' skills on entry to the academy not all teachers use this information to plan appropriate work. Targets are set and linked to behaviour, individual education plans and education health and care plans. However, the work provided is not at the correct level to enable students to meet their targets in all subjects. Further work is needed to meet this regulation.
- Evidence from students work indicates that teaching does not extend the skills sufficiently of those students who are capable of reaching the higher levels. This because work set is too easy or progression is not planned for sufficiently. Teachers do not mark students' often or well enough to enable them to make progress or improve their work. Marking remains poor overall in spite of some good examples in PHSE and English. In several subjects work had not been marked for some time. Teachers do not insist that all work, including homework, is completed. The academy has identified gaps in students' learning but planned activities are not suitable to give students the opportunities needed to help them overcome their previous difficulties. Further work is needed for the school to meet the teaching regulations in relation to planning and assessment.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

- The inspection of November 2014 found that leaders were unaware of the changes to this standard. They were unable to show within the curriculum, teaching or the daily life of the academy how they promoted students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders were unable to demonstrate how they actively encouraged respect for British values or how they ensured that students were not exposed to one political view or idea or how the curriculum promotes tolerance and respect for those people of different faiths and beliefs.
- Leaders did not make sure there was a planned programme of citizenship and personal social and health education and that there were a sufficient number of other organised opportunities which help students to become good citizens.
- The academy now meets all of the regulations in relation to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Work includes opportunities to discuss themes such as different beliefs, ways of living and issues such as those relating to drugs and relationships.
- The PSHE and therapy programmes are designed to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including providing opportunities to manage and express feelings and emotions in a range of ways.
- Students' vulnerability means that their access to others and to information is very carefully controlled. Students' have limited access to the internet and to mobile phones or to the world outside of the academy because of the nature of their previous experiences. However, they do develop an awareness of the working of public institutions and of the law. The PHSE programme now pays attention to personal safety issues including e-safety, bullying, and the potential dangers of social networking sites.

- An ethos of tolerance and respect for difference is promoted. Staff are good role models in the ways that they encourage students to be themselves, to express their views and of the need to develop social etiquette. There is a planned programme to develop self-esteem and confidence. Opportunities are provided across a range of subjects and therapy sessions. The PSHE and therapy programmes are designed to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including providing opportunities to manage and express feelings and emotions in a range of ways.
- British values and an appreciation of different cultures are promoted in subjects such as religious education, English and history. The citizenship programme has planned opportunities to learn about the work of parliament, local democracy and current affairs including learning about the current general election process. Systems are in place to protect students from extremist or politically partisan views.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- The inspection of November 2014 found that the vast majority of teaching staff were not trained in child protection or behaviour management, including physical intervention. Leaders were unaware of the requirement for staff to be trained in child protection and the part-time teachers had not undergone the required training. The designated person for child protection could not provide evidence of recent training, as his certificate was stated to be at the main academy site.
- Recruitment arrangements could not be checked as the files were located offsite.
- The inspection also found that some fire exits were either blocked or locked. No records kept of sanctions for serious misdemeanours or physical restraint.
- Staff recorded students' attendance in a notebook using the academy's own coding system. The codes identified by the Department of Education were not used. The admission register did not list students in numerical order of admission or alphabetically and the last school attended was not recorded.
- This inspection found that all safeguarding and welfare health and safety regulation are met. Students' safety and well-being underpin the academy's work. All of the required checks are carried out and recorded and policies and procedures have regard to Keeping children safe in education 2015 and Working together to safeguard children 2015 and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and has been appropriately trained. Other staff have been trained to this level to deputise if he is out of school.
- Staff have had recent training in behaviour management, child protection, child sexual exploitation and physical restraint. There is an appropriate behaviour policy that clearly sets out the rewards and sanctions to be used and any incidents are appropriately recorded.
- Safe recruitment procedures are implemented. Staff have been given copies of the most recent guidance.
- An appropriate fire evacuation plan has been prepared and no fire exits were found to be locked or blocked during the visit.
- The admission and attendance registers are completed in line with the regulations and the Department for Education's advice and guidance.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- The inspection in November 2014 found leaders were unable to produce an up-to-date single central register of staff checks. No checks had been made on whether teachers were subject to a prohibition order because leaders were unaware of this requirement or how to register with the Department's secure access service to obtain such information.
- This inspection found that the academy fully complies with the required pre-appointment checks and that these are appropriately recorded in an up to date single central record. Safe recruitment procedures are implemented and therefore all of the previously failed regulations are now met. Staff have been given copies of the most recent guidance.

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

- The inspection in November 2014 found that there was no hot water in the students' toilet. In addition, the leaders could not identify whether the cold water was of a quality which was able

to be drunk by students. The pathway from the home to the academy was poorly lit.

- Since the inspection, work has been carried out to ensure that there is adequate outdoor lighting, hot and cold water in the toilets and drinking water in the classrooms appropriately labelled. The failed regulations are now met and the premises are suitable for the number of students for which the academy requested a material change.

### **Provision of information**

- The inspection of November 2014 judged that the information provided on the website was misleading, stating that the provision was registered with Ofsted and leaders had not made a copy of the school's safeguarding policy available on the website.
- A copy of the academy's most recent safeguarding policy is now available on the website. However, this inspection found that where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority is registered at the school, leaders are not providing an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State. Therefore this regulation is not met.

### **Leadership and management**

- The inspection of November 2014 judged that the academy did not meet a very large number of the Independent School Regulations. Leaders have made good progress in tackling the majority of weaknesses that led to the failures consequently the school now meets all but seven of the regulations.
- As there are still unmet regulations, leaders, do not fulfil their responsibilities effectively. This because they do not keep a careful enough check on the work of teachers or make sure that students are given the right work at the correct level during lessons and for homework. Leaders do not check that teachers are following academy policy on marking students' work. Therefore, this regulation is not met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

- Ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively and enables all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a) and 2(1)(h)).
- Ensure that teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraphs 3 and 3(a)).
- Ensure that teaching involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and use of class time (paragraph 3(c)).
- Ensures that teaching demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- Ensure that where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State (paragraph 32(1)(h)).
- Ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school— demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (paragraph 34(1)(a)).
- Fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (paragraph 34(1)(b)).

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Wordsworth, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Information about this school

- Physis Heathgates Academy is situated in Prees near Whitchurch, Shropshire.
- The academy is registered for up to eight students, aged 10 to 18 years who have emotional and social difficulties. It currently has three students on roll, of which two who live at the children's home, which is on the academy site.
- The academy opened in August 2012 and had its first inspection in 23 July 2013 when it was judged to adequate.
- It has now extended its provision to include a separate offsite facility at its new children's home (The Retreat) in Shropshire.
- Despite the academy not having any material change approved, it started to operate in June 2014, when the two students who live at the home were admitted. A series of different teachers (up to nine) teach the students each week, often working alone in the outbuildings. They teach a range of subjects.
- An onsite education provision is located in the grounds of this children's home and is part of the main Physis Heathgates Academy, which is located about 40 minutes away near Whitchurch, Shropshire.
- A material change visit took place in November 2014 where a very large number of The Education (Independent School Standards) regulations 2014 were unmet.
- These unmet regulations were the subject of this progress monitoring visit.
- The academy submitted an action plan outlining its proposals to address these failings. This was evaluated in January 2015 and found to require improvement.
- This is the first visit to assess the progress made against its action plan and in complying with The Education (Independent School Standards) regulations 2014.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138580
<b>Inspection number</b>	463985
<b>DfE registration number</b>	893/629

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	School for students with emotional and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Female
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	3
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Physis Group
<b>Chair</b>	Clifton Supple
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Plant
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2014
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£59,800

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