

# Southbank International School

63-65 Portland Place, London, W11 3BU

**Inspection dates** 3 June 2015

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

## Context of the inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring inspection was undertaken at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the progress made by the school in the implementation of its latest action plan, and to check on the provision and arrangements for outdoor play.
- An emergency inspection was undertaken by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors at the request of Department for Education in May 2014. They checked the school's compliance with all the independent school standards referenced in Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils and Part 4. Suitability of proprietors and staff and supply staff. Inspectors found that, while the school met all independent school standards for checking the suitability of proprietors and staff and supply staff, several standards were not met in relation to ensuring students' welfare, health and safety.
- In July 2014, the school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education which detailed the steps the school would take to meet all of the independent school standards. It was judged by Her Majesty's Inspectors to require improvement because it gave insufficient detail regarding the expected impact and effectiveness of the proposed actions. The school submitted a revised plan to the Department for Education on 18 September 2014. At the request of Department for Education, the revised plan was evaluated as part of the follow-up progress monitoring inspection that took place in October 2014. This inspection found that, while the school had made some progress in addressing the shortcomings identified in the May 2014 inspection, two of the standards in relation to students' welfare, health and safety remained unmet.
- The school submitted a further action plan to the Department for Education which was evaluated by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors on 25 March 2015 and judged to be acceptable.

## Main findings

### Welfare

- The inspection of October 2014 found the school did not meet the requirements for safeguarding. There were a number of key omissions in the revised safeguarding policy. Furthermore, there was no guidance on how senior leaders would evaluate or report on the effectiveness of safeguarding. It was viewed that leaders placed too much reliance on their confidence in staff to recognise and report safeguarding concerns
- In its action plan, the school stated that it would amend the policy to take account of the omissions identified at the previous progress monitoring inspection and communicate any changes to staff. The plan also indicated that the safeguarding leaders would make use of local authority audit guidelines to check on the systems for safeguarding in the school and keep the school board informed of any concerns.
- Some of the planned actions have been successfully completed. Interviews with staff, including the designated leads for Portland Place and Conway Street, show a marked improvement in understanding of responsibilities and confidence in taking action to safeguard students. Scrutiny

of school records supports this view, although record keeping could be better organised and more detailed. The local authority designated officers have provided the school with ongoing advice on safeguarding concerns.

- The safeguarding policy has been amended to address the omissions identified at the last inspection and includes reference to the most recent Department for Education statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. However, senior leaders have focused on the points raised at the last inspection and not stood back to look at the overall safeguarding arrangements across the school. They plan to do this in September 2015. Consequently, there are still some shortcomings in the school's safeguarding policies and systems. These include:
  - reference to out-of-date Department for Education statutory guidance
  - the appointment checks listed in the main safeguarding policy do not fully reflect the current guidance and those listed in the school's recruitment procedures
  - no reference is made to the independent monitoring of the school's safeguarding systems
  - the school's policy has no reference to radicalisation and extremism, or to its prevention
  - there is a lack of detail about how students are taught how to stay safe online in relation to the use of social networking.
- The arrangements for the Executive Principal to report to the school board on safeguarding lack independence, because he is both a board member and the overall lead for safeguarding. These reports focus on actions taken rather than the effectiveness of the safeguarding processes and what lessons can be learned. The plan indicated that the three designated leads would make use of the local authority audit guidelines. However, at the time of this visit, the Executive Principal had yet to involve the other safeguarding leaders in auditing safeguarding provision.
- Two external audits, one in January 2015 and the second in May, have taken place. These were commissioned by the proprietors, Cognita. These external auditing arrangements are not documented in the school policy. They have yet to become sufficiently robust in ensuring that the school's child protection policy and procedures are fully compliant and effective and have full regard for Part 2 of the statutory guidance *Keeping children safe in education*. Consequently, while there have been improvements, the safeguarding standard remains unmet.
- The inspection of October 2014 found the school did not meet the standards for ensuring students' health and safety. The school had not undertaken a full review of risk assessments, some risk assessments were not fit for purpose and there was no risk assessment in place for students' going off site at lunchtime. In addition, the recording of accidents was not included in risk assessments and there was no reminder to staff to record any child protection concerns in the trip evaluation forms.
- In its action plan, the school indicated it would undertake a full review of risk assessment across all aspects of the school's activities, including for physical education with reference to medical conditions of students, and the expectations of staff to record incidents. Other actions included the strengthening of job descriptions for the members of staff who monitor students at lunchtimes and tightening of procedures for students' signing in and out when the students move between the Portland Place and the nearby Conway Street sites (a distance of just under half a mile).
- As a result of implementing its action plan, the school now has in place a comprehensive set of well-considered risk assessments covering the school's activities. Staff at all levels have a much greater understanding of the importance of risk assessments and now take a much more proactive approach to health and safety matters. They now routinely record any incidents and complete trip evaluation forms. Regular health and safety compliance meetings are ensuring a secure cycle of review, identification of concerns and follow up of agreed actions. As a result, the requirements are now met.
- The arrangements for students to play outside do not meet requirements. There is no outside space for students to play at either of the two Westminster premises. Younger students in Grades 6 and 7 have the opportunity to go to a nearby park only twice weekly. They also have the privilege of leaving the school site at lunchtime once a week. Students can choose where they go, but within a designated area close to the school which does not include the local park. As the students move up the school, the frequency with which they can leave the school site at

lunchtime increases; so that, by Grade 10, it is daily.

- The school's information and communication technology policy, known as the acceptable use policy, is referenced in the overall safeguarding policy, but not published on the school's website. Consequently, the detail of the school's arrangements for ensuring students' safety online is not readily available. The school website does not have maintained links to the two Ofsted-led inspections that took place in May and October 2014. Consequently, two of the independent school standards for the provision of information are no longer met.
- The school's leaders, which include the school board and proprietors, have focused too narrowly on addressing the issues raised in the October 2014 inspection. They have not fully implemented their action plan and firmly established systems for monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding. In addition, they have not taken sufficient steps to ensure that the requirements of the January 2015 independent school standards are met. Consequently, the new Part 8 independent standards for the quality of the leadership in and management of schools are 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 arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have full regard to the recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State, in particular to the management of safeguarding as set out in Part 2 (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable pupils to play outside with sufficient frequency (paragraphs 29(1) and 29(1)(b)).
- Ensure that the particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 in relation to e-safety are published on the school's website (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c)).
- Ensure that copies of all inspection reports are published and maintained on the school's website (paragraph 32(1)(d)).
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and the school actively promotes the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

## Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Information about this school

- Southbank International School was founded in London in 1979 as the American International School. The school is owned by Cognita Schools Ltd.
- The Southbank International School, Westminster campus opened in Portland Place in 2003, with additional premises for Grades 11 and 12 (Years 11 and 12) in nearby Conway Street coming into use in 2007. The school also has primary campuses in Kensington and Hampstead.
- Southbank International School, Westminster offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme and the IB Diploma Programme.
- Students are from a very wide range of nationalities, with the majority being children of parents who are in London on business or diplomatic assignments.
- An Executive Principal has oversight of all three schools within the group.
- The School Inspection Service (SIS) conducted the last full inspection of Southbank International School, Westminster in May 2013. Since that inspection, new Principals have been appointed to the Kensington and Westminster campuses.
- At the request of the Department for Education, an emergency inspection to the school was undertaken by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in May 2014, with a follow-up progress monitoring inspection, led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, in October 2014. Both reports are published on the Ofsted website.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100542
<b>Inspection number</b>	464923
<b>DfE registration number</b>	207/6383

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>	Independent
<b>School status</b>	Independent secondary school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	360
<b>Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form</b>	121
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Schools Ltd.
<b>Chair</b>	Ralph Kuglerr (Cognita Schools Ltd) Sir Christopher Woodhead (School Board)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Lacey (Executive Principal) Dr Chris Greenhalgh (Principal Westminster)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April–2 May 2013
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	(Grades 6–10) UK £23,940 (Grades 11–12) UK £26,100
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7436 9699
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7436 9699
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