

Finches School

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

Inspection dates

5 May 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.
- The most recent standard inspection of the school was conducted in June 2014, when the school was judged to be good. Subsequently, at an emergency inspection in January 2015, a number of the independent school standards were judged to be not met. In May 2015, the school's action plan to address the unmet standards was judged to require improvement.
- A progress monitoring inspection was conducted in October 2015. This found that a number of the independent school standards remained unmet and that the independent school standard for publishing information to inform parents or other interested parties about the school was no longer met. In February 2015, the school's second action plan was judged to require improvement.
- This is the second progress monitoring inspection to the school and was conducted without notice.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and operations director of Cavendish Education and staff.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's safeguarding policy, admissions and attendance registers, training records and the single central record of checks made to ensure the suitability of staff appointed since the last inspection.

Main findings

Welfare, health and safety

- At the time of the last inspection, it was found that although the proprietor had created a new safeguarding policy, it did not have regard to the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) (July 2015). Instead, it referred to documentation that was replaced by KCSIE.
- In line with their action plan, leaders have rewritten the school's safeguarding policy. This now has full regard for the current, published recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State, KCSIE (July 2015). This includes recruitment checks and makes clear the duty of all staff to report concerns, including those related to child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Also covered are the training arrangements for safeguarding for both school leaders and other members of staff and a brief outline of the proprietor's duty to monitor its effectiveness. A suitable but separate policy for promoting online safety is now in place. The personal, social and health scheme of work details how pupils across the age range will be taught about different types of bullying, potential risks and how to stay safe.
- At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that leaders had put in place a system for appointing new staff. The school's single central record and staff files show that all of the required checks were carried out for the two new members of staff appointed since then.

- The school's training records show that current staff have all received the required training for safeguarding and ensuring pupils' health and safety. Staff have received additional relevant training, including for recognising the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism, fire safety, first aid, and health and safety. Two members of staff have also undertaken appropriate training as designated safeguarding leaders. They have plans for further training, for example in the use of physical restraint.
- The school's action plan outlined the actions leaders were taking to confirm the information about the pupils who were on roll at the time of the October 2015 inspection. After considerable effort, they have obtained this and recorded it in the electronic admissions register. This now contains all of the required information, including pupils' leaving and destination information. Until pupils' date of leaving, leaders continued to record attendance appropriately. Leaders have ensured that the local authority officers are aware and active in supporting these pupils, both of whom are of sixth-form age. Leaders have taken a printout to meet the requirements for at least an annual printout of the register.
- The previously unmet independent school standards for safeguarding and maintenance of an admissions register are now met.

Provision of information

- At the time of the October 2015 inspection, it was found that the then new proprietor had not published all of the required information about the school to inform parents and other interested parties about the school. In addition, the school had not made available to parents its arrangements for safeguarding either in electronic form or on paper.
- As stated in their action plan, leaders have set up the school website, completed their work on a new prospectus and put in place a detailed welcome pack. These now provide all of the required information.
- Similarly, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are now available both electronically and in paper form in the welcome pack. Leaders are also ensuring that any revisions are uploaded to the school website so that they are immediately available to parents. Consequently, the school now meets the previously unmet independent school standards for the provision of information.

Leadership and management

- At the time of the last inspection, it was found that not all the independent school standards were met. Leaders have implemented their action plan to address this. They have liaised with local authority officers to clarify the position of the few pupils on roll at the time of the last inspection. Although these pupils have now left the school, leaders have ensured that local authority officers are appropriately supporting these pupils, both of whom are of sixth-form age. Leaders are actively seeking pupils for the school but are sensibly waiting until the school is judged to meet all of the independent school standards.
- The proprietor has drawn well on its own and expertise from its other schools to ensure that the required policies, systems and procedures are in place and that these reflect current guidance. This additional expertise is also supporting the headteacher and staff, for example in establishing new information and communication technology equipment and systems, and through staff attending training sessions run at one of the group's other schools, including training for safeguarding.
- Finches School is now part of the proprietor's established termly cycle of monitoring of the quality of provision across the group's schools. The process includes regular contact with the headteacher, frequent school visits by an adviser and the operations director of Cavendish Education, and formal termly visits and headteacher reports. This then forms the basis for school improvement and for leaders to check that the school meets the independent school standards.
- The school now meets the independent school standards for leadership and management.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Finches School is owned by Cavendish Education Ltd and caters for up to 20 pupils aged seven to 18 years with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Currently there are no pupils on roll.
- Pupils are referred by their local authorities and have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The school focuses on improving pupils' behaviour, social skills and academic achievement. It aims to educate and inspire young people, encouraging them to think differently and regain confidence and a love of learning.
- The school is located 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.
- The school plans to make use of local off-site facilities for physical education.

School details

Unique reference number	139558
Inspection number	10017778
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
School status	Independent school
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	0
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	0
Proprietor	Cavendish Education Ltd
Chair	Aatif Hassan
Headteacher	Adrian Mahon
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,500
Telephone number	020 8343 0105
Email address	adrian.mahon@finchesschool.co.uk

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