

Barbara Speake Stage School

East Acton Lane, East Acton, London W3 7EG

Inspection dates

7–9 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in academic subjects is not yet good.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 4, pupils did not achieve well enough in English, mathematics and science.
- The most able pupils are not challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some leaders are relatively new to their roles. They lack the experience and skills to play their part in school improvement.
- Leaders do not analyse assessment information to evaluate the progress that pupils make from their different starting points.
- Systems to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness are not well developed. Leaders do not make effective use of performance management to improve teachers' practice.
- Leaders do not evaluate data to establish the rates of attendance of different groups of pupils.
- Leaders have not made the professional development of teachers a priority. The good practice evident in artistic subjects is not transferred to academic subjects.
- Pupils in the senior school are not given the information they need to keep themselves safe.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils behave well and work hard. They learn to respect others' points of view.
- Pupils' achievement in performance subjects such as art, dance, drama and expressive arts is high.
- Opportunities for all pupils to develop their social and cultural skills are strong.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date training. Pupils feel that they are well cared for.
- The junior school provides well thought-out opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of keeping safe.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They value the artistic opportunities that their children receive.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that new leaders have the skills and confidence to contribute effectively to school improvement, including monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - using performance management to promote effective practice
 - using assessment information to analyse the progress of individuals and groups of pupils from their different starting points
 - ensuring that leaders analyse absence rates carefully to inform actions to improve pupils' attendance
 - implementing well thought-out opportunities for senior pupils to develop their understanding of how to stay safe.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make strong progress in academic subjects by ensuring that:
 - teachers make good use of assessment information to plan activities that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - work is planned to challenge the most able pupils
 - pupils develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - teachers correct misconceptions and build on pupils' strengths, particularly in English, mathematics and science
 - pupils receive well thought-out opportunities to apply the strong language skills they use in artistic subjects to the academic curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Most members of the leadership team are new. They have yet to receive training and professional development to support their roles in school improvement. Leaders do not have clear strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility.
- The school's assessment data is not used well by leaders to evaluate pupils' rates of progress. Although they check pupils' current attainment, the data is not analysed to see if this represents good progress from pupils' different starting points, or to identify any underachievement.
- Leaders have not been effective in helping teachers develop their classroom practice and there are no clear systems for staff appraisal. Leaders' use of performance management targets for teachers is not systematic. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning is not good in all subjects, particularly in academic subjects.
- Leaders do not evaluate information related to pupils' attendance. As a result, leaders do not identify patterns and trends related to absences over time to inform further action.
- The proprietor and headteacher have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- The headteacher has recently been responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and safeguarding has been a top priority. He has ensured that policies and safeguarding training for staff are up to date. The safeguarding policy is published on the website and reflects the latest guidance.
- After a period of turbulence in staffing, the headteacher and proprietor have successfully recruited a full complement of staff, including appointing new leaders. Staff and parents support the new leadership arrangements. They say that morale is better than it was in the past.
- The headteacher and proprietor work in close partnership. They have recently given increased leadership responsibilities to other staff. The new designated safeguarding leads are beginning to make a difference. They are ambitious to implement positive changes to safeguard pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that pupils requiring additional support are identified and liaises effectively with external agencies.
- Specific initiatives are also beginning to make a positive difference. For example, some classes have welcoming learning environments and individual teachers have improved their behaviour management techniques by responding to leaders' feedback.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, with rich provision in the artistic curriculum. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy learning subjects such as history and science alongside performance-related subjects. Leaders have taken initial steps to ensure that recent curriculum changes, particularly the implementation of new GCSE courses, are reflected in teachers' planning. However, these are at an early stage of development.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. In

particular, pupils benefit from performing a wide range of plays and visiting theatres regularly. For example, they spoke enthusiastically of working with Chinese students during a performance-related visit. In the junior school, the artistic and academic curriculums are enhanced with a wide range of experiences. For example, pupils learned about different festivals and took part in themed days such as the 'international day of peace'. In the senior school such opportunities are more limited.

- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Visits such as those to the Supreme Court, Parliament and museums enable pupils to have a broad understanding of British institutions. Pupils also have opportunities to contribute to the community, for example by performing shows for patients at a nearby hospital. However, opportunities for pupils in the senior school to reflect and discuss these visits are not as well planned as they could be.
- Parents hold positive views of the school. They value the 'family feel' of the school. One parent commented that 'the students within the school are exceptionally supportive of each other'. However, some parents said that the school's communications with parents could be improved, in particular in providing timely information about upcoming events or last minute changes.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body.
- The proprietor, who founded the school in 1945, still holds responsibility for governance. She is passionate about the school and ambitious for pupils to fulfil their dreams within the performing arts. She is highly regarded by staff, pupils and parents.
- The proprietor has taken difficult decisions to restructure the management of the school. She realises that a number of issues still exist and has a clear timeline to correct these.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher, the recently appointed head of junior school and the school secretary are effective in their roles as designated safeguarding leads.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are recorded well. Information on individual staff is organised and easily accessible.
- Leaders made training for all staff a priority at the start of the year. Staff are clear on how to raise concerns and have received guidance on specific matters, including the 'Prevent' duty.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils. They are vigilant and make timely referrals to external agencies when appropriate.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They know safeguarding procedures well. They are clear on what to do should they have a concern, in particular during the regular performance activities that involve external agencies. Leaders understand specific potential risks to pupils within the performance industry. However, they have not ensured that pupils in the senior school are taught about these risks in a planned and explicit manner.
- Parents agree that their children are safe. A parent's view, typical of others, was that she

valued 'the care and attention given to individual pupils'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in the academic curriculum are not high enough. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Although teachers set work that broadly takes into account pupils' different abilities, the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged with work that deepens their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities benefit from small class sizes where teachers can provide regular support. However, these pupils are over-reliant on adults and are not encouraged to tackle more difficult work independently.
- Teachers make regular checks on pupils' work and provide guidance to help pupils with their learning. Strong working relationships enable pupils to ask for help if they are not sure. However, teachers do not routinely correct pupils' misconceptions, which limits their progress.
- In the lower junior school, the teaching of phonics is effective and pupils respond well. Pupils are taught to read with confidence, fluency and expression. The teaching of drama also allows pupils to develop strong reading skills. Pupils read scripts independently and perform roles in a self-assured manner. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their comprehension skills.
- Teachers encourage pupils to apply learned phonics rules to their writing and increasingly expect them to write at length. In the senior school, progress in writing falters because errors and misconceptions in pupils' English work go uncorrected. As a result, pupils repeat common mistakes, which hinders their progress. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not provided with tasks that develop their deeper thinking.
- In mathematics, there is insufficient teaching or practice of problem-solving skills.
- Teachers' questioning in drama and dance supports pupils' strong progress in these subjects, particularly in their speaking and listening development. However, in academic subjects, questioning is more restricted so that pupils do not develop these skills further.
- Pupils are highly motivated to do well in performance subjects and work very well, collaborating with their peers. For example, pupils respectfully evaluated the effectiveness of their peers' performance during a rehearsal for the play 'We Will Rock You'.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, even when they complete mundane tasks. They work diligently and take pride in their work. Books are presented to a good standard.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in the senior school lacks depth.

In particular, as a consequence of weak provision in PSHE and the wider curriculum, senior school pupils are unable to articulate their understanding of potential risks they may face in performance-related work.

- Pupils' understanding of safety in the junior school is strong. Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and talk confidently about how to keep safe online. PSHE education provides younger pupils with opportunities to discuss their feelings.
- Leaders take the safety of pupils on site seriously. Policies are detailed and well thought-out. As a result, the school is an orderly and safe environment. Pupils say that they feel safe at school.
- Pupils are well supervised at break times. However, opportunities for the younger pupils to use equipment at break times is limited.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They respect each other's points of view. Pupils told inspectors that the artistic curriculum allows them to support each other, no matter what the ability of their peers. They say that incidents of bullying are extremely rare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are courteous, self-assured and have positive attitudes to their learning. There are strong working relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils benefit from small class sizes where teachers know them well and encourage them to work hard.
- Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils, particularly those in the junior school, speak highly of the rewards they receive for good behaviour.
- Pupils also speak highly of a 'family feel' to the school and say that they work collaboratively to sort out any issues, should they arise. They trust staff to deal with any incidents.
- Pupils' punctuality has improved. Pupils are encouraged to arrive on time and know the importance of regular attendance. However, leaders' analysis of attendance information is limited. Attendance registers indicate that most pupils attend well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make sustained progress in their academic subjects because the quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining at least grade 4 in GCSE English and mathematics was low. The proportion attaining expected standards in science was below the school's expectations.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils' attainment was broadly similar to the national average in English and mathematics. In key stage 1, pupils' current knowledge of phonics is below age-related expectations. A recently introduced phonics programme is beginning to make a difference.
- The school has no data to analyse pupils' progress over time. The evidence of the review

is that progress is limited in academic subjects. This applies across the attainment range, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able.

- Although pupils read with expression in performance-related subjects, they do not develop their inference skills sufficiently to support their reading in academic subjects.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. The school's artistic curriculum encourages pupils to develop in confidence.
- In mathematics, pupils routinely practise the methods they have been taught but are rarely asked to consider alternative methods or to solve problems.
- Pupils achieve well in performance subjects such as art, dance, drama and expressive arts. The majority of pupils intend to pursue careers in the performing arts. These pupils are well prepared for working in the performance industry. Leaders are aware of a minority of pupils who decide not to continue with a performance-related career. These pupils receive adequate support to progress to alternative future pathways.

School details

Unique reference number	101948
DfE registration number	307/6050
Inspection number	10012825

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Proprietor	Barbara M Speake
Headteacher	David Speake
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,560–9,000
Telephone number	020 8743 1306
Website	www.barbaraspeake.com
Email address	enquiries@barbaraspeake.com
Date of previous inspection	25–27 June 2013

Information about this school

- Barbara Speake Stage School is an independent day school for boys and girls. It specialises in the teaching of the performing arts as part of its artistic curriculum. Pupils learn English, mathematics, science and a humanities subject as part of its academic curriculum.
- The proprietor has been running classes at the premises since 1945. The school was established in 1963.
- The school is registered for 140 pupils aged 4 to 16 years. There are currently 66 pupils on roll. There is no early years foundation stage. The lower junior school consists of a mixed-age class with pupils aged 4 to 7. The upper junior school is a mixed-age key stage 2 class. The senior school consists of individual classes for each year group from Years 7 to 11. There is no alternative provision.

- The majority of pupils speak English as a first language. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan. The school has identified some pupils that require additional support.
- The school aims to promote the skills of creativity, education, talent, imagination and artistic development. Pupils regularly receive opportunities to work professionally in the performance industry.
- The school was last inspected in July 2013 when it was judged to provide an adequate quality of education. It received an emergency visit in September 2014. Due to unmet independent school standards, it also received monitoring visits in January and June, 2015. It no longer operates the closed circuit television cameras which were raised as a potential safeguarding issue in a previous monitoring visit.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- Inspectors visited all classes in both the junior and senior school. The quality of learning in the academic and artistic curriculum was evaluated. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Work in pupils' books was reviewed during visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and the proprietor. Inspectors met with a group of pupils and spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents relating to safeguarding. The school's single central record, pre-employment checks and records relating to health and safety were reviewed.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised relating to pupils' progress and welfare. These included assessment information, behaviour logs and attendance information.
- Inspectors met with staff members and considered 11 written responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors met with parents informally at the beginning of the school day. They took into account 34 responses to the Parent View questionnaire and 33 written responses.

Inspection team

Noeman Anwar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Matthews

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017