

Excelsior College

Selby Centre, Selby Road, Tottenham, London N17 8JN

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. The school has significantly declined since the previous inspection.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Procedures to check the suitability of staff are weak. The single central record of staff employment checks is not compliant.
- The site is unsafe. The poorly maintained outdoor and communal area poses a risk to pupils. A risk assessment policy is not in place.
- The headteacher's awareness of the latest safeguarding legislation is poor. He has not kept his training up to date. The safeguarding policy and procedures are not fit for purpose. Arrangements to manage any allegations against staff or the headteacher are not in place.
- The school's work to secure pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Failure to keep pupils safe significantly puts their physical and personal well-being at risk.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it does not ensure that pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Overall, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils' progress in other subjects requires improvement.
- Teaching and the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics are not well matched to the ages, aptitudes and abilities of different pupils. Pupils' progress across the subjects other than English and mathematics is not checked.
- Leaders have not ensured that activities in some sessions are sufficiently challenging. Pupils say that some work is too easy.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. The school delivers pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents are happy with the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the arrangements for safeguarding and keep pupils safe from harm by ensuring that:
 - the identity of visitors to the school is appropriately checked
 - the checks made on all members of staff adhere to the latest legislation set out by the Secretary of State
 - the designated leader for safeguarding has up-to-date training in accordance with the most recent guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016)
 - the policy and procedures for safeguarding are up to date and include the correct contact information for the local authority safeguarding team
 - procedures to manage any allegations against a member of staff, including the headteacher, are in place and understood by staff and parents
 - there is an effective risk assessment policy and that risk assessments are undertaken for all activities, including outdoor play and pupils' use of the communal areas
 - the outdoor play area is free from hazards and safe for pupils to use
 - fire safety checks are undertaken routinely, and firefighting equipment is accessible and well maintained
 - a system is in place to review the safety of the school site regularly.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes, and identify priorities for improvement accurately
 - the curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics is well planned and takes into account the different ages and abilities of pupils
 - an up-to-date accessibility plan is in place.
- Improve pupils' outcomes across the range of curriculum subjects other than English and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan activities appropriately to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding
 - teachers set work for pupils that is sufficiently challenging and takes into account pupils' ages and abilities.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The headteacher has failed to ensure that the independent school standards have been met consistently. This has a significant impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Leaders have not safeguarded pupils' personal development and welfare. They have not put policies in place to secure pupils' health and safety, including for first aid and the assessment of risks.
- The headteacher has not evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. School improvement priorities are unclear and plans for ongoing improvements are not in place.
- The curriculum for subjects other than English, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is not well planned. Staff do not help pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a suitable range of subjects. Physical education (PE) opportunities are hindered by a lack of safe outdoor space and inconsistent use of local outdoor facilities. Pupils told inspectors that other than swimming, they do not do PE at school. There are few opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities.
- The headteacher has not used professional development opportunities well enough to improve the quality of teaching over time. Although staff receive informal feedback about the quality of teaching and outcomes, they do not have opportunities to develop their teaching skills to raise standards further.
- The school's accessibility plan is not up to date. Furthermore, the school does not publish the required information on its website. The headteacher does not provide parents with some of the key information set out in the independent school standards.
- The headteacher was not able to provide evidence of his current first aid training qualification. Pupils' health and well-being are at risk because staff are not suitably trained to deal with medical or first aid issues.
- The headteacher has not put systems in place to ensure that complaints are handled correctly. The complaints procedure does not meet requirements because it does not contain the necessary information for parents. It does not refer to how the school would manage a complaints hearing or provide information to inspectors or the Secretary of State.
- At the time of the inspection, no children were on roll in the early years. The school does not meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage. Although the headteacher has improved the tracking systems for children in the early years, the school is unlikely to meet the learning and development requirements. This is because of the weaknesses identified in outdoor provision and the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to reflect, share their opinions and listen to others. They have a good understanding of democracy and are central to the decision-making that takes place in the school.
- Pupils learn about the world around them. Opportunities for pupils to research different faiths and cultures are in place. Pupils speak sensitively about respect for others and understand the importance of British values in their community.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The headteacher has not made arrangements to ensure a culture of safeguarding.
- The headteacher has not carried out all the appropriate checks on the suitability of staff. The single central record of pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff is not compliant.
- The headteacher is the school's designated safeguarding leader. He does not have an up-to-date understanding of the guidance from the Secretary of State.
- The school's safeguarding policy is not fit for purpose. It does not reflect the current guidance set out in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016). Guidance for staff on how to deal with safeguarding concerns, including disclosures, is ineffective. Arrangements for liaising with the local authority to safeguard pupils' welfare are ineffective.
- Arrangements for managing any allegations against the headteacher, or other members of staff, are not in place. The headteacher has not considered the potential issues relating to managing allegations, particularly as he and the only other members of staff are related to each other.
- The school site is poorly maintained. The headteacher has not taken appropriate action to maintain the safety of the school site. He has not assessed the possible risks to pupils' safety and has not put a written risk assessment policy in place.
- Pupils' safety is compromised further by a lack of attention to the upkeep of the school premises. The outdoor area, for example, is in poor repair. Pupils are at risk from a range of trip hazards, including broken paving tiles and disused items. During the inspection, pupils were exposed to dirty water from a leaking downpipe in their play area.
- The headteacher has not assessed the risks that pupils face when they access the school. On entering and leaving school, pupils walk through a busy car park and an area that is very poorly maintained. This area is strewn with cigarette litter, damaged furniture, broken glass, food waste and rubbish. Inspectors saw open vermin traps and potentially dangerous commercial waste bins. The headteacher has not assessed the dangers associated with this area. These failings have a negative impact on pupils' safety and well-being.
- Fire safety is poor. Extinguishers have not been tested for five years. In the kitchen area, fire blankets are not easily accessible. Inspectors identified that the fire exit from the outdoor area was blocked. The doors were prevented from opening fully, and pupils would not have been able to escape quickly from the outdoor area in the event of an emergency. By the end of the inspection, staff had rectified this problem because inspectors brought it to the headteacher's attention.
- Admissions registers do not meet requirements. The headteacher was unaware of his duty to inform the local authority when a pupil leaves the school or is deleted from the admissions register.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Pupils' learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and PSHE is not well planned. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not well developed over time in a wide

range of subjects. Staff do not check pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- Schemes of work are not in place for curriculum subjects apart from English and mathematics. Consequently, teaching beyond English and mathematics does not build on what pupils already know and can do.
- Staff have recently introduced a new system to measure pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but it is not used well. As a result, teachers do not have a clear view of the progress that pupils make over time.
- The level of challenge for pupils is inconsistent. Sometimes, staff give pupils work that is too easy. Older pupils told inspectors that in some subjects they complete work that they already know and that time is wasted while they wait for more challenging activities. Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to adapt activities to meet pupils' needs.
- Written work in pupils' books shows that their attitudes to learning are variable. Pupils' presentation is untidy and book covers are torn; pupils are not encouraged to take pride in their work. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils read often and enjoy talking about their favourite books. Staff encourage pupils to think deeply about the texts they read. For example, pupils demonstrate good understanding of the narrative, and compare characters, plots and themes effectively.
- Pupils learn successful strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Spelling is taught well, and pupils apply their spelling, punctuation and grammar effectively in longer pieces of writing.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. They use resources independently when asked to by the teacher to help them understand key concepts. Teachers encourage pupils to give reasons for their answers and to try a range of calculation strategies to find an answer. For example, younger pupils are successful in finding fractions of numbers and older pupils grapple with the task of finding equivalent fractions. Teachers often choose to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on and explain their learning in mathematics.
- The promotion of pupils' speaking, listening and social skills is strong. Pupils articulate their ideas clearly and are encouraged to debate and discuss topics and themes with staff and peers.
- Teachers know pupils well. They listen to pupils' ideas, take account of their interests and adapt learning activities to inspire and engage them. Teachers address misconceptions in pupils' learning well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because the headteacher has not ensured that pupils are kept safe from harm. Pupils' welfare is compromised by the significant failings in health and safety and in the arrangements for safeguarding.

- The headteacher's promotion of pupils' physical and emotional well-being is not effective. Opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities in school are severely restricted because the outdoor areas are unclean and unsafe for pupils. Pupils' physical development is poor because the outdoor areas are unsuitable and resources are not good. PE is limited and does not encourage pupils to lead healthy lives.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly positive. However, work in pupils' books is sometimes presented poorly. Pupils are not encouraged to present their work neatly or to look after their books and papers.
- Pupils are confident learners. Staff promote pupils' self-esteem well and provide them with many opportunities to find things out for themselves.
- Pupils know that bullying is wrong and are confident that staff will deal with any concerns they raise. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and that pupils look after each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. They are respectful to their friends and visitors. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to school routines. They conduct themselves well in school.
- Pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy school. Older pupils take care of the younger ones, and enjoy their positions of responsibility. Pupils say that behaviour is usually very good.
- Staff ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to deal with the potential dangers of cyber bullying.
- The headteacher encourages pupils to develop an understanding of themselves as individuals. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to show initiative, make decisions and have their say. Pupils listen to and respect the views of their peers with maturity.
- Pupils enjoy the many trips and visits into the local community and across London that the school organises. Assemblies and the PSHE curriculum help pupils to understand the different faiths and cultures that make up modern Britain. Pupils understand the importance of respect for others' beliefs.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make strong progress across a wide range of subjects. Weaknesses in the planning and teaching across the curriculum mean that pupils are not helped to make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books and on display around the school does not demonstrate that pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.
- When staff do not provide pupils with challenging work, pupils' progress weakens, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils attain in line with, or above, the standards expected for their ages. Pupils achieve well in

independent secondary school entrance examinations and secure places at the secondary schools of their choice.

- Strategies to develop pupils' reading skills are successful. Younger pupils use phonics well to read new words. Pupils apply their phonics well in writing. They learn to spell and use words accurately. Overall, pupils' progress in reading and writing is strong.
- Pupils make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills. Pupils are helped to make independent choices and have a say in what they do so that they take responsibility for their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	102174
DfE registration number	309/6076
Inspection number	10035785

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Gareth Gilfillian
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Gareth Gilfillian
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,972.80
Telephone number	020 8365 1153
Website	www.excelsiorcollege.co.uk
Email address	gilfillian2@hotmail.com
Date of previous inspection	11–13 March 2014

Information about this school

- Excelsior College was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2014, where it was judged to provide an adequate quality of education.
- The headteacher is also the proprietor. The school does not have a governing body or a board of trustees.
- The school is situated within The Selby Centre, a multi-use centre serving the wider community. Pupils are taught in one classroom, in flexible groupings.
- At the time of this inspection, no children were on roll in the early years.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice. The inspection took place over two days. On day one, a team inspector accompanied the lead inspector.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors observed learning sessions, reviewed pupils' work in books, folders and on display.
- The lead inspector met formally with all pupils to discuss their learning and views of the school. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with two parents during the inspection to seek their views. There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, for these to be considered.
- The inspectors visited all areas of the school and site that are used by pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, and checked compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Seal

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures 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
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work—
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
 - 3(a) 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;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) 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.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—

- 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
- 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim probation order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if it contained in either such direction.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff (“S”) appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff (“S”), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable—
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school’s internet website or, where no such website

exists, are provided to parents on request;

- 32(1)(d) following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection;
- 32(3)(a) particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
- 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
- 32(3)(e) particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;
- 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which—
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is—
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
 - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and—
 - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
 - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body

conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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