

Phoenix Place

Redcar Street, Camberwell, London SE5 0NA

Inspection dates

12–14 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked together to significantly improve the school, which now offers a good quality of education.
- The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe from harm are effective.
- Parents are overwhelmingly grateful for the school's flexible approach to meeting pupils' needs.
- Teachers plan relevant, engaging and interesting lessons. As a result, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants effectively support pupils' learning and emotional needs.
- Pupils say that the teachers understand their needs and are patient and caring.
- The staff team members are united and ambitious to improve their school further. They all understand pupils' complex social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school actively promotes equality and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff.
- Pupils' behaviour improves over time. However, the use of fixed-term exclusion has increased this year.
- All the independent school standards are met. However, leaders and governors do not check closely enough that they are compliant with these standards. During the inspection, leaders had to undertake some additional work to meet some of the requirements.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to go outside for exercise and recreation.
- Leaders do not always ensure that staff pay enough attention to detail, for example when writing incident reports.
- Leaders are implementing a new assessment system from September 2018. It will track pupils' progress more thoroughly in all subjects, and in relation to their social and emotional progress.

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?

- Ensure that leaders and governors regularly check compliance with all of the independent school standards.
- Review the increased use of fixed-term exclusions and take action to reduce them.
- Improve the quality of assessment, pupils' outcomes and personal development by ensuring that:
 - as planned from September 2018, pupils' progress is more thoroughly measured, recorded and reviewed in all subjects and in relation to their social and emotional development
 - pupils more regularly and routinely spend time during the school day outside for exercise and recreation.
- Ensure that all staff pay close attention to detail when completing documentation, such as incident reports.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Much work has been undertaken since 2016 to improve Phoenix Place. It now provides a good quality of provision to girls with complex needs.
- The parents, staff and external professionals spoken to during the inspection were equally positive about the school. A common theme was the school's flexible, patient and caring approach.
- The curriculum is effective in meeting pupils' needs and interests and includes all the required areas of learning. Pupils in key stage 3 follow the national curriculum, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 access a number of accredited options. These include GCSEs in English, mathematics and religious education, and other courses in science, computing, 'preparation for working life' and beauty. Pupils are additionally supported well by an impartial careers adviser. The curriculum is likely to be enhanced further in September 2018, when new qualifications in the creative arts, digital skills, physical education, and dance and yoga are introduced.
- The school's work to promote equality, and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is strong. In addition to pertinent assemblies and a relevant personal, social, health and economic education programme, pupils this year have enjoyed the World Taekwondo Grand Prix, careers fairs, photography and sculpture exhibitions, empowerment workshops, music studio visits, writing workshops and a photography project. As a result, pupils are being prepared well for their next steps as young citizens.
- Leaders and governors (members of the strategic advisory panel), do not regularly check compliance with the independent school standards. Leaders were given time to correct some minor issues during the inspection, such as updating policies and ensuring website compliance.
- Sometimes the recording of information, such as the writing of incident reports, lacks rigour. This lack of attention to detail means there are inconsistencies in reporting and potentially slows effective follow-up when useful details are missing.

Governance

- Governance is effective.
- The strategic advisory panel has now been operating since 2016. Following the school's last full inspection, the panel, which comprises a range of professionals with a wide range of expertise, met monthly to prioritise the required actions to improve the school. They now meet termly and have helped to support the necessary improvements for the school to offer a good quality of education.
- The chair provides focused support and challenge to the school's proprietor, who is also the headteacher. She has an increasingly secure knowledge of the school and is fully committed to its ongoing development. She is not afraid to ask challenging questions, including via her weekly conference calls with leaders, and has helped to develop the school's ambitious vision to become a leading specialist alternative provision for girls.
- However, members of the panel have not been checking leaders' knowledge of, and

compliance with, all of the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Ensuring pupils' safety is taken extremely seriously. There is a culture of vigilance.
- Pupils feel safe at Phoenix Place. They routinely learn about how to keep as safe as possible, including online and in relation to criminal and sexual exploitation.
- The school's safeguarding leaders are proactive, knowledgeable and accessible to staff and pupils.
- Staff receive regular and effective training.
- Leaders record concerns and referrals appropriately and follow them up rigorously.
- The school's appropriate safeguarding policy is available online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is in very small groups. Pupils say this gives them the support and attention they need to learn effectively, following their typically disrupted and negative experiences of mainstream education.
- Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers, and other staff members such as therapists and teaching assistants. Staff are positive role models.
- Teachers have high expectations and strong subject knowledge. They work hard to make lessons and learning activities interesting; this is generally effective in ensuring that pupils engage and learn well.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to provide pupils with additional support during lessons, or to 'cool off' and refocus.
- Checks on pupils' core skills (reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and 'learning behaviours') are undertaken when pupils start at Phoenix Place, which help to inform teachers' planning. Staff then track and review pupils' progress over time. From September 2018, leaders are implementing a new assessment system which will more thoroughly measure, and moderate, progress in all subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and comfortable at Phoenix Place.
- Pupils regularly learn about personal safety, including in relation to pertinent topics such as female genital mutilation, social media safety, domestic abuse and sexual, and criminal, exploitation.
- Bullying is rare. Where incidents do occur, including outside of school, they are effectively

dealt with.

- The school's leaders report pupils' good social and emotional development using their 'learning behaviours' system.
- There are not enough timetabled arrangements to take pupils off site for recreation and exercise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good because for pupils who typically present challenging behaviour it generally improves over time.
- The attendance and punctuality of the majority of pupils are good, but some pupils are persistently absent. Leaders do much to support and challenge pupils and their families. As a result, pupils' attendance typically increases in comparison to their previous placements.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour are relatively rare, as is the use of physical intervention with pupils. However, the use of fixed-term exclusion has increased significantly this year. Leaders acknowledge the need to review the effectiveness of exclusion and take action to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils typically arrive with a negative view of school, significant gaps in their education, and low starting points.
- Pupils make good personal progress, especially in relation to their social and emotional development. Staff make pupils feel successful and enable them to believe in their own abilities.
- The school's information, and pupils' work, shows that pupils make good progress over time across a range of subjects, and especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who remain at the school long enough achieve qualifications, such as GCSEs, functional skills and entry-level accreditation. In addition to English, mathematics and science, these include beauty, preparation for working life and food hygiene. These outcomes typically reflect good progress from pupils' starting points.
- The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. For example, almost all recent leavers are either successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools or are now successfully learning in college placements.

School details

Unique reference number	141701
DfE registration number	210/6007
Inspection number	10048724

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	Special day school for girls
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Sophie Nelson
Chair	Linda Carmody
Headteacher	Sophie Nelson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000 to £79,000
Telephone number	020 7703 7189
Website	www.phoenixplaceschool.co.uk
Email address	info@phoenixplaceschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 May 2016

Information about this school

- The school's most recent full standard inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in May 2016. Inspectors judged several independent school standards to be unmet and the school's overall effectiveness as inadequate. Two unannounced progress monitoring inspections followed in February and April 2017 respectively. The April 2017 inspection judged all the independent school standards to be met.
- The school occupies the Brandon Baptist Church in the London Borough of Southwark.
- The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, is supported by a strategic advisory panel.
- The school provides education for up to 24 girls, aged 11 to 16. Most pupils have

education, health and care plans for social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- The pupils who currently attend the school are placed by five local authorities.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector jointly observed learning in a range of subjects throughout the inspection alongside the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspector met with pupils and scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and attendance. He also looked at a range of pupils' work.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspector spoke with five parents by telephone.
- The inspector met the proprietor (who is also the headteacher) and deputy headteacher throughout the inspection. He also met with the chair of the school's strategic advisory board.
- The inspector met with the teaching and support team. He also considered the 11 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspector considered the views of senior representatives from two placing local authorities.
- The inspector spoke with a representative from local child and adolescent mental health services, who works closely with the school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including policies, logs and information related to safeguarding and health and safety. He toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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