

# Marathon Science School

1–9 Evelyn Street, Surrey Quays, London SE8 5RQ

## Inspection dates

12 July 2018

### Overall outcome

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

### Residential provision outcome

**The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i) and 3(j)*

- Although there is some effective teaching, there are important weaknesses in pupils' learning. Weak planning, poor use of resources, and ineffective teaching methods limit pupils' progress. For example, in some classes interactive whiteboards are used poorly, making presentations impossible to read. On other occasions, teachers are too quick to give pupils the answer and not give them enough time to think things out for themselves. As a result, pupils are not engaged in their learning and lack motivation.
- Where teaching is effective, particularly in mathematics and statistics, pupils make good progress. Consequently, they achieve GCSE results that are above the national average. Teachers use their subject knowledge confidently to help pupils learn by making the work interesting. In English, pupils reach standards that are a little above average. However, in other subjects such as science, history and geography, pupils' progress is weak, and their attainment is below that seen in other schools nationally.
- Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour effectively. The school's behaviour and discipline policy, which is in the staff handbook, is generally implemented well in classrooms. Pupils are respectful of their teachers and do as they are told. There is little poor behaviour. However, where pupils are not engaged by teaching they quickly become bored and switch off.
- The standards in this part are not met by the school.

### Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

*Paragraphs 5, 5(b)(1) and 5(b)(iii)*

- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour. As a result, behaviour is good overall. The school enables pupils to develop their self-confidence effectively. Pupils speak confidently about their experiences at school and their learning.
- Pupils' understanding of the way they can contribute to the local community or wider

society is limited. Although staff promote a culture of respect, pupils know little about how to contribute to society. There are weaknesses in the way the school promotes fundamental British values and some pupils were unable to talk about these confidently. Their knowledge about British institutions and the range of religious traditions was weak.

- The school does not meet the standards in this part.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders were unable to provide a single central record of recruitment checks by the end of the inspection. Although they said that they did have a record of the checks, they did not know that this was the single central record.
- Safer recruitment procedures are not robust. Staff files contain enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all seven staff. Four of these are more than three years old. There is evidence of two references being sought, but no indication in files that the reliability and authenticity of the emailed responses are checked.
- The school does not meet the standards in this part.

#### *Paragraphs 8, 8(a) and 8(b)*

- Safeguarding arrangements to protect children do not meet statutory requirements. The school does not follow guidance issued by the Secretary of State consistently in relation to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.
- The school does not meet the standards in this part.

#### *Paragraph 10*

- Pupils are clear that there is no bullying, and that everyone gets on well and respects others. They say that teachers reinforce the importance of respect consistently.
- There is a bullying policy that states it should be read 'in conjunction with' the behaviour and disciplinary policies. Together, the policies provide a generally effective strategy to prevent bullying, including cyber bullying. Some aspects are not entirely clear. For example, the bullying policy notes that 'relevant issues' will be raised in 'PSHCE (personal, social and careers education) programme and assemblies'. However, there is no PSHCE or assembly on the school timetable posted in the corridor. Nevertheless, evidence indicates that bullying is rare and that pupils are confident that it is not a problem.
- The school meets the standard in this part.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- Although this was not within the scope of this inspection, evidence shows that no fire safety checks have been carried out on the school site since August 2016. This includes checks on fire extinguishers. Similarly, there have been no fire risk assessment checks for two years. During the inspection, the London Fire Brigade (LFB) visited the school site at the request of the social care inspectors. This revealed that the member of staff who had completed the most recent fire risk assessment does not have the necessary knowledge or training. In addition, there was evidence that someone was sleeping on the school premises. This represents a serious fire risk.

- The school does not meet the standards in this part.

#### *Paragraph 13*

- Although first aid is mentioned in the health and safety policy, which is contained in the staff handbook, there is no separate and detailed written first aid policy. While there is no evidence to suggest that first aid is administered ineffectively, records lack detail.
- The school does not meet the standards in this part.

#### *Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- School leaders were unable to provide a written risk assessment policy. This means that leaders cannot be assured that they are safeguarding the welfare of pupils or are taking appropriate action to reduce any risks.
- The school does not meet the standards of this part.

### Part 6. Provision of information

#### *Paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c)*

- Although there is a written safeguarding policy published on the school website, the information about the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is out of date. The named member of staff has left the school. This is unacceptable.
- The written safeguarding policy differs considerably from the child protection policy contained in the staff handbook. For example, the child protection policy refers to out-of-date documents and contains insufficient information and guidance about the risks of child sexual exploitation or radicalisation and extremism. Worryingly, those named as the DSL and the deputy DSL also no longer work at the school.
- The school does not meet the standards of this part.

### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

#### *Paragraphs 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(j) and 33(k)*

- The written complaints policy is available on the school's website and as a printed copy from the school. It sets out a clear, four-stage process for dealing with complaints. These include an initial informal stage and clear procedures for the complaint to be made in writing and, if requested, heard by panel.
- Time scales for the complaints process are clearly identified. In addition, the policy states that a written record will be kept of complaints and made available to complainants.
- The school meets the standards in this part.

### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

#### *Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders do not demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. The headteacher was not available during the inspection, because he was out of the country. The assistant headteacher had not

been adequately briefed about his role and was thus unable to provide sufficient information. For example, leaders could not answer all the questions about safeguarding, whether documents were available or how procedures were implemented. Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

- The school does not meet the standards in the part.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders were unable to provide a copy of the accessibility plan. As a result, the school does not meet this standard.

#### Residential provision

##### The overall experience and progress of children

*Taking into account, how well children are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers.*

##### *Standards 13.4 and 13.5.*

- Leadership and governance are weak. Neither the new headteacher nor the head of boarding were present during the inspection. The assistant headteacher noted that record-keeping was 'all over the place'.
- Management is inconsistent. Senior leaders lack clarity about their roles and responsibilities. There is insufficient monitoring by leaders, including oversight and evaluation of the boarding provision. As a result, a large number of the national minimum standards are unmet, including those not met at the previous inspection.
- Record-keeping is of an extremely poor quality. In many cases, there is a lack of key paperwork. For example, there were no records of fire evacuation for the boarding provision.
- Despite these considerable weaknesses, the school has evidence that staff, including the new headteacher, have had training in safeguarding. Leaders recognise the school's widespread shortfalls and are committed to improvement. However, at present leaders and managers lack the capacity to tackle the school's failings.

##### *Standards 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1 and 11.1*

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. They do not meet statutory requirements. The school does not follow guidance issued by the Secretary of State in relation to the document, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.
- Staff do not record or evaluate safeguarding incidents. This has resulted in the school not following safeguarding procedures regarding a serious concern about a boarder. This limits a full and independent investigation by the appropriate external agency.
- The boarding provision is unsafe. Unqualified and inexperienced staff complete key risk assessments, such as fire safety audits in the boarding provision. Inspectors observed missing smoke detectors and window restrictors, and ineffective fire doors. In addition, there were inappropriate video games accessible to boarders and no gas safety certificate for the boarding house. Unsafe building materials that were left lying around were removed at the request of inspectors. Nevertheless, the materials presented a huge risk to boarders.

- Young people are well behaved. They feel safe from bullying and feel safe in the boarding provision. Young people get on well with each other and report that they find their peers a helpful source of support.

*Standards 1.1, 2.3 and 3.4*

- Some key information is missing from the boarding provision. The pupil handbook does not contain details of the Office of the Children's Commissioner for boarders to contact in case of problems or distress. A statement of boarding principle is not available on the school website and was not available during this inspection.
- Staff do not manage medication effectively. This inspection found medication storage and recording procedures to be unsafe. Medication was not locked away, with distribution limited to one staff member. Recording procedures do not monitor distribution effectively.
- Despite these concerns, boarders say that they enjoy the boarding experience, spending time with their friends and 'having fun'. They are clear about the rules and expectations in respect of behaviour. Pupils say that the rules are fair and that teachers intervene proportionately to tackle behaviour incidents. Staff manage behaviour effectively with positive reinforcement, such as the use of rewards. There have been no recent occasions where the use of physical intervention has been necessary to manage behaviour.
- Young people feel supported in their education during boarding hours. They described how staff help them with their studies and that there are a range of after-school study groups to help them.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for independent boarding schools**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

- Ensure that the teaching at the school 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; fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves; involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; 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; utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(f)).
- Ensures that principles are actively promoted which encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely (paragraphs 5 and 5(b)(iii)).
- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges (paragraphs 8, 8(a) and 8(b)).
- Ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- Ensure that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy (paragraph 13).
- Ensure that 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- Ensure that 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 (paragraph 32(1)(c)).

- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

### **The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools**

- A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents and staff, is made known to boarders, and is seen to work in practice. In particular the school to make available a copy on the school's website (standard 1.1).
- Each boarder has a choice of staff to whom s/he can turn for personal guidance or for help with a personal problem. In particular, boarding staff to ensure that access to appropriate helplines, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to be made available to boarders (standard 2.3).
- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so (standard 3.4).
- Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and findings acted on to reduce risk for all boarders. In particular, to ensure that the boarding house is maintained to an appropriate standard, including window restrictors to be fitted (standard 5.1).
- The school ensures compliance with relevant health and safety laws by drawing up and implementing effectively a written health and safety policy. The school to ensure that all risk assessments and audits are conducted by a member of staff qualified to do so (standard 6.1).
- The school ensures that 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (6.3).
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (standard 7.1).
- The school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (standard 11.1).
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (standard 13.4).
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. In particular, the school to ensure the recording of supervision and appraisal for boarding staff is recorded (standard 13.8).

## School details

Unique reference number	135901
Social care unique reference number	SC400622
DfE registration number	209/6409
Inspection number	10055350

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.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	22
Proprietor	Seven Hills Education Trust
Chair	Kamil Canbay
Headteacher	Mr Uzeyir Onur
Annual fees (boarders)	£8,500
Telephone number	0207 231 3232
Website	<a href="http://www.marathonschool.com">www.marathonschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@marathonschool.com">info@marathonschool.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	21–23 March 2017



### **Information about this school**

- Marathon Science School is an independent secondary boarding school with an Islamic ethos. It is registered for boys aged 11 to 19 years. The school opened in September 2009 and currently has 28 pupils on roll. Most pupils are boarders. The number of pupils on roll has declined since the previous inspection in March 2017.
- The school is located near Surrey Quays and the boarding provision is in Hackney. Most pupils are of Turkish background. Pupils mostly come from neighbouring London boroughs and the East Midlands. A few pupils are from Austria, the Netherlands and Germany.
- Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school currently caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 years.
- The school does not have any pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The school does not have any pupils who attend alternative provision.
- The school day begins at 8.30am and ends at 3pm. The school uses its own transport to transfer pupils between the school and the boarding provision.
- The headteacher was out of the country during the inspection and available by telephone only. The head of boarding was on annual leave.
- The proprietors include a group of four trustees, who comprise the Seven Hills Educational Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- This was an unannounced emergency integrated inspection as a result of a complaint about the school.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents and policies, including those relating to safeguarding, and scrutinised the school's personnel files.
- Inspectors observed the boarding provision and scrutinised a range of documents relating to boarders, including fire safety.
- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across a range of subjects. The assistant headteacher accompanied inspectors on three observations.
- Inspectors met with the assistant headteacher and senior leaders. They also spoke to all pupils.
- Telephone conversations were held with the London Fire Brigade (LFB). Three fire officers and the local authority's environmental health offers visited the Surrey Quays site.

## Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Barnaby Dowell	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Kevin Whatley	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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