

Allen House Independent School

C/O St Christopher's Fellowship, 1 Putney High Street, London SW15 1SZ

Inspection dates

13–15 November 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leadership is ambitious for the school and is highly committed to do the best for its pupils.
- Governors provide strong support and challenge to the headteacher to bring about improvements.
- The curriculum is bespoke and meets the needs of pupils. It re-engages pupils well in their learning after unsuccessful experiences in the past.
- The quality of teaching is good, and pupils make good progress in most subjects during the time they are at school.
- The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The good-quality care and support they receive contributes well to their personal development, safety and well-being.
- Pupils understand British values and they are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding is effective and pupils feel safe. Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety is at the heart of the school's work.
- There are strong links with professionals and external agencies, including local authorities, to ensure that the needs of pupils are met.
- There is strong communication between staff to safeguard pupils and ensure their well-being.
- Teachers do not routinely expect pupils to complete their work or consolidate the learning to ensure that progress is sustained.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to improve their writing skills.
- Arrangements are not in place to check the quality of teaching and provide appropriate training to improve classroom practice.
- There is insufficient focus on the school's main priorities to ensure continuous improvement.

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 teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - pupils' work is checked for completion and their knowledge and understanding are consolidated
 - there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length to improve their writing skills.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching and learning is checked more closely to improve practice
 - professional development is used effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - leaders have a sharper focus on the school's main priorities to bring about continuous improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor, governors and the headteacher work well as a team to bring about improvements and ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders are ambitious for their pupils and provide a nurturing and supportive environment. This helps pupils to re-engage in their learning after a disrupted or interrupted education before joining the school.
- There are strong links with professionals, external services and local authorities, including social workers, to meet the needs of pupils. The education, health and care (EHC) plans are well documented and closely followed.
- The communication between staff is strong to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Pupils are assessed on entry to the school on their aptitudes and skills, particularly in their functional skills in English and mathematics. Leaders develop a bespoke and flexible curriculum for each pupil and use their personal education plans to meet their needs.
- The curriculum is designed to engage pupils in their learning and promote their self-confidence and personal development. There are sports and gym facilities for pupils at a nearby leisure centre to develop their physical well-being. The educational visits motivate pupils and extend their experiences.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about valuing the cultural and religious diversity represented in the British society and to have respect for others. They also learn about citizenship, including democracy, the rule of law and equalities. As such, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils make educational visits to various landmarks in London, including art museums, library and the Houses of Parliament. However, the lack of additional staff limits the range of visits.
- Representatives from the local authorities are highly complimentary about the quality of care, support and education that pupils receive.
- Aspects of leadership are, as yet, underdeveloped. Leaders have not gathered and analysed the information they need to identify the school's main priorities and plan for improvement.
- Leaders have not made arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching or for the professional development of staff to improve classroom practice.

Governance

- Governance is effective. The proprietor and governors are knowledgeable, skilful and experienced. They are well trained, including on matters relating to safeguarding children.
- Governors have worked closely with the headteacher to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and flexible to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Governors have ensured that all the school policies are updated and reviewed.

- Governors receive regular information from the headteacher to keep them informed about aspects of the school's work, including the curriculum. Governors have recently agreed to the appointment of an additional member of staff to support the headteacher and contribute to pupils' learning.
- Governors visit the school often to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and to check on pupils' welfare and safety. Governors have plans in place to ensure that there are closer checks on the quality of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders understand the vulnerability of the pupils and have established a strong culture of vigilance to keep pupils safe and protect them from harm. The school works closely with carers and external organisations to ensure that pupils are safeguarded.
- All staff are trained on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is always given a high priority and that safeguarding records, processes and procedures are fit for purpose.
- The school's safeguarding policy pays due regard to the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State, including in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2018). The school does not have a website, but makes the policy available to carers and visitors on request.
- There are high levels of supervision during the day to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders have strong systems for risk assessment and the management of health and safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and pupils make good progress. A strong feature of teaching is the positive relationships between staff and pupils. This gives pupils confidence and the motivation to learn.
- Currently, teaching is limited to one member of staff with a very small number of pupils. Teaching is engaging and challenges pupils. Questioning is used well to test and consolidate pupils' understanding. On occasion, teaching is on a one-to-one basis and pupils show a good level of concentration.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and providing them with rich opportunities for speaking and listening. Pupils' success is recognised and praised.
- Reading is taught well and pupils are questioned on the meanings behind words to extend their understanding of the text. Pupils are encouraged to read and stronger readers are able to read with confidence and expression.
- Pupils are encouraged to show respect for other people, including those who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. For example, teaching successfully challenges any stereotypical views expressed by pupils through debate, discussion and a balanced presentation of opposing views.
- Information technology is used well to support pupils' learning. For example, in an English

lesson, pupils read extracts from 'Gangsta rap' by Benjamin Zephaniah, and selected different video clips to match different artists.

- Pupils' interest is taken into account and pursued to make learning relevant. For example, a pupils' interest in rabbits led to a project that included caring for rabbits and visiting a farm.
- Pupils enjoy cooking some of their favourite dishes in food technology lessons, including sweet potato curry and samosas. Pupils also plan their weekly menu based on healthy food options.
- Pupils said that teaching is good and they make good progress.
- There are occasions when pupils are not required to complete their work, thus failing to consolidate what they know, understand and can do. This leaves gaps in their learning.
- Although there are some improvements in pupils' writing, they do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length to improve their writing skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff ensure that pupils' safety, welfare and personal development are always given a high priority. Risk assessments, including risk assessments for individual pupils, are thorough and fit for purpose.
- Pupils typically join the school with low self-esteem and self-confidence, as they have been disengaged from education and have a negative view of schooling.
- Staff meet regularly and work well together to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for, and develop trusting relationships based on mutual respect. In this way, staff ensure that pupils receive the care and support they need. Pupils are closely supervised throughout the day.
- The headteacher works closely with a wide range of external agencies and professionals in order to meet pupils' emotional needs and ensure their health and safety. There are good links with schools to support pupils' learning, especially where pupils are dual-registered with their home school.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and can speak to member of staff if they have any concerns. They said that there is no bullying in the school. Pupils know how to keep safe online and understand the dangers associated with cyber bullying and extremism.
- Lunchtimes in the kitchen are calm and orderly and are used well as social occasions for pupils to interact with each other and staff.
- Careers guidance helps pupils to understand their career options. The school is developing further opportunities for pupils to gain work experience where appropriate.
- The curriculum includes suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep healthy. For example, pupils create their own menu for eating healthy foods.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils come to school with histories of disturbed behaviour in their previous schools. Leaders have created a calm, supportive and orderly environment that helps pupils to settle quickly and have confidence in staff. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are respectful to staff and respond well to school rules concerning their conduct and behaviour.
- Pupils said that behaviour is good; this is reflected in the school's behaviour log that shows very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils are well known to staff and any potential situations are effectively de-escalated.
- Occasionally, some pupils have to withdraw from the classroom when they find the learning environment overwhelming and managing their emotions difficult. Pupils return to their learning when they are ready and the teacher skilfully re-engages them in their learning.
- Pupils are generally keen to learn and usually attend their lessons. Leaders know that there are no safeguarding issues in relation to any absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan and are looked after by local authorities. All the pupils at the school are disadvantaged. Pupils join school with a wide range of needs. Pupils have a history of disrupted education, including exclusion, and barriers to their learning. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills. They start school with skills and abilities that are typically below, or well below, those expected for their age.
- Pupils join school at different times of the year and some spend a short time in the school. On entry to school, pupils are assessed in their basic skills in English and mathematics to develop personalised learning programmes. This information is also used to check the progress that pupils make.
- Currently, there are very small number of pupils at the school and some have started very recently. It is, therefore, difficult to make any secure judgements on the outcomes of pupils or their progress over time. The previous cohort of pupils was also very small and spent a short time at the school before moving on to other secure provision.
- Strong teaching and support help pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Pupils also have good opportunities to improve their skills in food technology, art and music. Improvements in pupils' personal development and engagement have a positive impact on the progress that they make.
- Most pupils are being prepared for the qualifications in English and mathematics functional skills. However, a few pupils are likely to move to another provision in the very near future and may not complete their course.
- Pupils enjoy reading. The confident readers read accurately and with expression; the weaker readers are able to use some of their knowledge of the sounds that letters make

to read unfamiliar or difficult words. Pupils enjoy role-playing some of the characters in the books they read as a class.

- Although pupils make good progress with their written work, particularly in writing short sentences, they lack the resilience in writing at length for different purposes to improve their writing skills.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good, particularly in number work and algebra. They are able to use different methods to solve mathematical problems.
- As pupils continue to build their self-esteem, confidence and positive attitudes, they are being prepared well for the next steps in their education, employment or training.

School details

Unique reference number	145165
DfE registration number	206/6003
Inspection number	10054304

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	Independent secondary day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jonathan Walley
Chair	Hanif Barma
Headteacher	Beverley Michaels
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,200
Telephone number	020 7700 4765
Website	None
Email address	AHISinfo@stchris.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Allen House Independent School is located in the London Borough of Islington. It is run by the St Christopher's Fellowship, which is a United Kingdom charity and provider of social housing for vulnerable young people.
- There are currently three pupils on roll between the ages of 13 and 14 who started school at different times during this autumn term. All pupils have an education, health and care plan and are looked after by their local authority.
- The school's aim is 'to provide an environment where pupils are able to learn, develop and progress to a point where they are able to access mainstream education'.

- The school has a governing body.
- The headteacher is the only member of the teaching staff.
- The school does not have, or intend to have, a website.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- This is the school's first full independent school standard inspection after its pre-registration inspection on 9 October 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one inspector with one day's notice and took place over two and a half days.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, chair of governors and staff. A telephone discussion was held with the proprietor.
- The inspector held telephone discussions with social workers, who act as carers for pupils who are looked after by their local authority.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their learning and views about the school, including their safety and the support they receive.
- The inspector observed teaching sessions on day two. There was no teaching on day three because pupils had other meetings that they had to attend with professionals in relation to their support and EHC plans.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in class.
- The inspector checked the work in pupils' books and folders. The school's compliance with the independent school standards was considered. A range of documentation was reviewed, including risk assessments, audits, policies and minutes of governors' meetings. The single central record and other safeguarding policies and practices were scrutinised.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- There were no responses to the staff questionnaire. The headteacher is the only member of the teaching staff.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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