

North London Rudolf Steiner School

1–3 Campsbourne, Hornsey, London N8 7PN

Inspection dates

7–9 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and trustees have not ensured that all the independent school standards have been met. Safeguarding is not effective because the premises are not compliant with fire safety legislation. An external fire risk assessor identified multiple areas for improvement during the inspection.
- Toilet facilities were unsuitable. Guards on gas fires posed safety risks and up-to-date gas safety certificates were not in place.
- Leaders and trustees were unaware of the fire safety risks until this inspection. This was due to a lack of communication between them and the property's owners.
- Leaders' evaluation that all independent school standards are met was inaccurate. The inspector identified several health and safety issues during the inspection. Leaders had not recognised or addressed these.
- The early years provision is inadequate because safeguarding is not effective.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders responded swiftly to issues raised during the inspection. They made several immediate improvements to site security and safety. All other aspects of safeguarding are effective.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, and lead to good outcomes. The curriculum engages, inspires and motivates children. Children develop a strong sense of curiosity and enjoy exploring the world around them.
- Leaders, staff and trustees have been successful in their aim to provide 'a caring, supportive, creative community'. Parents and carers are delighted with the education their children receive, and staff are proud to work at the school.
- This is a harmonious community where children play and learn well together. They behave well and respond positively to staff's high expectations of them.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule of 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?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders and trustees check documentation held by the owners of the building, to make sure that the premises are compliant with fire safety regulations
 - leaders regularly and routinely check toilet facilities and heating equipment in all learning spaces so that there are no potential risks to children’s health and safety.
 - all the independent school standards are met
 - the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are met.
- Strengthen further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - activities consistently support the oldest children in the school to make the progress of which they are capable
 - children are routinely well supported during whole group or ‘ring time’ activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- At the start of the inspection leaders believed that the school complied with all the independent school standards. This was because they had too readily accepted guarantees from the owners of this multi-occupancy site that the building was compliant with current fire safety and gas regulations. They had not scrutinised documentation to assure themselves that this was the case.
- Leaders provided no current fire safety risk assessment or gas safety certificate during the inspection. Any reviews they believed to have taken place had not resulted in effective action to meet fire safety requirements.
- At the start of the inspection, the inspector identified several issues with the site. These related to the safety and privacy of the children's toilet, the security measures on entry to the building, the inadequacy of the first aid/medical room, and the danger associated with the wire cage gas fireguards in classrooms.
- Leaders responded with a sense of urgency to these concerns. The medical room was made fit for use, security was strengthened at the point of entry to the school, and the gas fires in learning spaces were turned off. However, the children's toilets did not meet the expected minimal standard. A boiler had been fitted behind the children's toilet. This was not encased in line with gas safety requirements, and not working. The safety of the boiler and the temperature of the hot water could not be tested. This meant that the independent school standard in relation to toilet facilities could not be met.
- During the inspection, leaders engaged a certified fire risk assessor to check the building for signs of danger. The assessor immediately alerted them to many issues relating to fire safety, of which they were previously unaware. London fire services were subsequently commissioned to undertake a thorough risk assessment immediately following the inspection.
- Leaders are thorough and precise in assessing risk in all other aspects of the school's work. They have ensured that children feel safe, and parents are confident that their children are very well cared for. A warm, nurturing ethos permeates the school. There is a strong culture of kindness, respect, tolerance and patience.
- Staff are highly committed to the Steiner ethos and curriculum. Parents believe that the school is successful in delivering what it sets out to do. They speak highly of the impact of the school on their children's personal development. A typical comment from a parent was, 'the children thrive and learn to love learning'. There have been no complaints from parents since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum interests and inspires children of all ages. They benefit from learning across a range of topics, themes and areas of learning. The strong focus on seasons and change has a deep impact on children's understanding of the world. The 'garden curriculum' provides children with an exciting and stimulating range of opportunities to learn outdoors.

- Children develop a good sense of right and wrong. Their focus on festivals and cultures helps them to value traditions celebrated by their classmates. They reflect on and value differences between them. They understand and are respectful of family structures which do not reflect their own. The curriculum provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is underpinned by a clear focus on equity and equality.
- The curriculum for the oldest children in the school is enriched through special projects, and a range of visits. For example, they enjoy observing seasonal changes through a sequence of visits to Alexandra Palace. However, sometimes activities planned for the oldest children are not sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders have ensured that systems for checking and recording children's ongoing progress and development give them a complete view of each child. The local authority checks the assessments of children's development at the end of the early years to ensure accuracy.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and give useful feedback to practitioners on how to develop their skills further. The chair of the college of teachers provides a good role model of effective practice for other staff. Practitioners stated that they have benefited from high-quality professional development. They are particularly enthusiastic about the training to help them to strengthen their expertise in delivering the Steiner approach to the curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's website is compliant.

Governance

- The school's leaders are held to account by the trustees, who govern the school. The trustees are committed to providing the best possible Steiner education for children. They provide excellent support and challenge to leaders which are sharply focused on school improvement.
- Trustees know the staff and the school well. They are creative and forward thinking in their approach to the financial challenges the school faces.
- Trustees have worked hard to develop good lines of communication with the owners of the site. Despite their efforts, they did not have the information they needed to assure themselves that the site was safe. As a result, they failed to ensure that all the independent school standards were met.
- Trustees treated all issues raised by Ofsted as urgent and took immediate action to try to resolve them. Their absolute priority is to ensure that children are kept safe, and to make sure that any deficiencies in the premises are corrected.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective because of the premises and health and safety concerns outlined above.
- However, leaders, trustees and staff are well trained in all other aspects of safeguarding. Checks made on staff when they are recruited are meticulous, detailed and in line with current guidance. All staff and trustees receive up-to-date and regular safeguarding training. Staff are clear about procedures for raising concerns about vulnerable children.

They are aware of possible safeguarding risks, and vigilant to them.

- The safeguarding and child protection policies refer to the most current guidance and are well understood by staff.
- A number of staff members have received first aid training.
- Parents expressed absolute confidence in the school in relation to their children's safety and well-being. One parent said, 'Clear rules and routines help children to feel safe.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and practitioners know children well. They plan interesting and engaging activities to capture their interest. For example, children of all ages contributed to making raised flowerbeds in the garden.
- Specialist volunteers skilfully lead additional lessons such as eurhythmy, which supports children's physical and social development. These sessions are underpinned by rhyme, rhythm and song, which children respond to very well.
- Practitioners find imaginative ways to teach number, shape and space. For example, children worked collaboratively on making a spider's web across a circle, using wool. They then described the shapes they had made.
- Children enjoy story time, which supports their understanding of narrative, and exposes them to the oral tradition of storytelling. These sessions help children to develop their vocabulary. They listen attentively and join in when invited by the teacher.
- Occasionally during 'ring time' or story time sessions, children's learning is not as routinely strong. In addition, planning for these sessions does not regularly take account of the oldest children's starting points.
- Older children helpfully support younger children to access learning activities. However, the older children are not consistently challenged to build on their knowledge and skills during some of the whole-group sessions.
- Staff record their observations daily to create a detailed profile of every child. These are used to plan opportunities to build on children's learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is inadequate because the school's leaders have not ensured that fire and health and safety standards are met.
- However, the warm, nurturing relationships which underpin the school's work ensure that children feel safe and are well cared for. During transitions from one part of the building to another, travelling up and down the stairs, or out into the garden, staff are highly vigilant about children's safety. They have established clear expectations and routines, which ensure that children and staff hold hands, and carefully support each other to navigate staircases and steps to the garden.

- Children are confident to tackle new challenges in their learning and are resilient in their efforts to solve problems and work together. Learning is a sociable, enjoyable experience for children at this school.
- The school is a calm, happy place to be. Snack times are a sociable time where children chat confidently with each other and adults. Children help to prepare the food and describe the day in terms of the snack they eat, such as 'bread day' or 'soup day'. Food prepared by the children is nutritious and beautifully presented. There is a real sense of occasion as children eat together.
- Children who attend the afternoon club enjoy this provision. They have fun, relax and enjoy themselves in the care of a highly effective practitioner.

Behaviour

- Children's behaviour is good. Their behaviour is routinely good whether they are taught by their daily teachers or by weekly volunteers. They play and learn well together.
- Children understand the daily rules and routines and adhere to them. They respond quickly to adult intervention on the odd occasion when they lose focus or have minor altercations.
- There is no bullying at the school, and incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children's outcomes show that they make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Throughout the school, there is evidence of children's achievement in mathematics, design technology, arts, crafts, science, geography and music.
- The school is exempt from teaching the literacy element of the early years foundation stage. Nevertheless, children learn about story structure and choose to engage in book making to present their achievements. Learning is frequently underpinned with rhythm, rhyme and song. Children engage in mark-making, and some choose to experiment with forming letters. Practitioners help children to recognise sounds in words.
- Children's attainment is good by the end of the Reception Year.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Early years provision is inadequate as safeguarding throughout the school, including in the early years, is not effective. This is due to the unmet independent school standards relating to health, safety and welfare.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision are inadequate because safeguarding is not effective. As a result, early years statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding and welfare have not been met.
- Children's personal development and behaviour are good.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment help children to make good progress from their

starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	102169
DfE registration number	309/6067
Inspection number	10094402

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 6
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Number of part-time pupils	23
Chair of trustees	Dr Sue Peat
College of teachers	Katharine Ward, Gabriele Woelfle
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,382–£6,483
Telephone number	020 8341 3770
Website	www.rudolfsteiner.london.sch.uk
Email address	info@rudolfsteiner.london.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–15 March 2017

Information about this school

- London Rudolf Steiner School is an independent co-educational day school registered for children aged between three and six years. Twenty out of the 23 children are below statutory school age. There are too few pupils in key stage 1 for the report to write about these pupils separately. The school operates an optional afternoon club, after the school day has finished.
- The school is in a church building in the London Borough of Haringey. The building has multiple occupants. The owners of the building undertake premises management. Leaders and trustees do not employ those responsible for the safe upkeep of the site.

- The school is led and managed by the college of teachers. This consists of a chair and an administrator. A group of trustees manage and support the work of the college of teachers.
- The school follows the early years foundation stage curriculum, with agreed exemptions from the Department for Education. The school is exempt from teaching the literacy requirements and has agreed modifications to elements of other early learning goals.
- There are no children identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- No children are in the care of the local authority.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected in March 2017 by the school inspection service. The overall judgement was 'good'. The last Ofsted inspection took place in October 2007, when the school was judged to be satisfactory.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out observations with the chair of the college of teachers in classrooms and in the outdoor learning spaces.
- The inspector toured the premises with school leaders and with the site manager. She spoke with an accredited fire risk assessor who was called into the site during the inspection. She also spoke with officers from the London Fire Service on the telephone.
- The inspector reviewed the school's information about children's achievement and scrutinised a range of children's outcomes. She talked to children during their play and learning.
- The inspector met with a group of trustees, including the chair of trustees, to discuss their work. She also met with members of staff.
- Meetings were held with leaders to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. The inspector looked at a range of documentation regarding the organisation of the school and its curriculum.
- The inspector attended a meeting for prospective parents. She reviewed the 12 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and five responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

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
 - 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 complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23 (1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.
- 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.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 28 (1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water
 - 28 (1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

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.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 3.55 Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire and any other emergency, and must have an

emergency evacuation procedure.

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