

Barbara Speake Stage School

East Acton Lane, East Acton, London W3 7EG

Inspection dates

30 April to 2 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership has been ineffective over time in bringing about improvements. The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that the weaknesses from the previous inspection have been fully addressed.
- Leaders have not ensured that the correct safeguarding procedures are followed. Consequently, safeguarding is ineffective.
- Leaders do not make sufficient checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to bring about improvements.
- Teachers do not receive enough training and support to improve their practice.
- Teachers' use of assessment to plan learning for pupils is weak, particularly in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils often do not know how to improve their work.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Leaders do not analyse assessment information effectively to evaluate the progress that pupils make from their different starting points.
- Pupils' progress across the school in the academic curriculum is weaker than in the artistic curriculum.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils practise and strengthen their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress in the artistic curriculum, including dance, drama and arts, is strong.
- Leaders have made sure that personal development, behaviour and welfare are good.
- Pupils read well and they read regularly.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors are very positive about the school.
- Very recent changes to the school's leadership are having a positive impact on school improvement.

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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the correct safeguarding procedures are followed effectively in the event of any safeguarding and child protection issue and that the designated safeguarding lead urgently updates their training on safeguarding
 - systems are in place to hold leaders to account for the work they do, including improving pupils' progress
 - there is a greater focus on the academic curriculum so that pupils' outcomes are as strong in academic subjects as in the artistic curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make strong progress in academic subjects by ensuring that:
 - staff receive regular training and support to improve their practice
 - leaders routinely check the quality of teaching and learning
 - pupils' progress is closely measured and those falling behind are provided with timely and effective support
 - the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged through work that extends their thinking
 - assessment information is used effectively to plan appropriate learning activities for pupils, particularly in key stages 1 and 2
 - pupils receive effective guidance on how to correct and improve their work
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills across the curriculum, particularly in the upper school.
- 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 proprietor and senior leaders have not addressed the main areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding procedures are effectively followed when dealing with safeguarding issues.
- Systems to check the work of senior leaders and hold them to account for bringing about improvements lack rigour. Consequently, weaknesses are not effectively tackled.
- Leaders do not make routine checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They are not able to provide effective guidance to teachers on how to improve. Overall, leaders do not have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- There is a lack of support, professional development and training opportunities to help teachers to improve their classroom practice. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is not good, particularly in academic subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and engages pupils' interest. Pupils' learning is enriched through participation in dance, drama, ballet and musical theatre, and visits to museums and theatres. School performances and plays, including singing, are of high quality. However, there is insufficient time allocated to the academic subjects.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils visit different places of worship and celebrate a range of cultural events, including European day of languages, international day of peace, Chinese New Year and Remembrance Day. Overall, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school promotes British values well. Pupils learn about democracy, respect and the rule of law, including through visits to the Houses of Parliament. They sing and take part in performances for hospital patients and for local care home residents.
- Recent changes to leadership have already made an impact on ensuring that all the relevant policies are up to date and in place.
- Leaders have reviewed the school's complaints policy, and put in place clear procedures on how to deal with informal and formal complaints. The complaints policy now meets requirements.
- The school no longer has provision for children aged four and it appears that the Department for Education has not been notified.

Governance

- The proprietor has very recently appointed a new governing body. The new governors are skilled, experienced and highly committed to bringing about improvements. While they have yet to meet formally with school leaders, they have helpfully produced a draft action plan which highlights the main priorities for the school.
- Prior to the appointment of the governing body, the proprietor held the responsibility for governance. She has high aspirations for pupils to pursue careers in the performing arts.

However, since the previous inspection senior leaders have not been sufficiently challenged and held to account in order to bring about improvements.

- The proprietor knows about the school's weaknesses, for example in the academic curriculum, but has not taken effective action to develop this area. The proprietor has not ensured that leaders follow the correct safeguarding procedures when dealing with safeguarding issues.
- The proprietor is currently overseeing the restructuring of the senior leadership team.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy, which reflects the latest statutory guidance, is published on the school's website.
- However, senior leaders have not followed the correct procedures outlined in the school's safeguarding policy when dealing with safeguarding issues. There is a lack of communication between senior leaders and an insecure understanding of the effective action to take when dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues.
- The school does not currently have a fully trained designated safeguarding lead. The headteacher and the proprietor have not paid full regard to the current government statutory guidance and requirements on safeguarding. Consequently, safeguarding is ineffective.
- Other staff have received up-to-date training on the current safeguarding and child protection procedures, including 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2018.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including when online and from extremist views.
- Leaders carry out routine checks on the safety of the school site to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The headteacher carries out all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, particularly in the academic subjects. They have not checked the quality of teaching. Teachers have received insufficient support to improve their classroom practice.
- Leaders have not improved the systems for checking the progress of pupils since the previous inspection. Teachers' use of assessment information to plan appropriate learning activities for pupils is weak. For example, in mathematics in the secondary phase, learning moves on to new concepts too soon, leaving gaps in some pupils' knowledge. Pupils are often not clear how to improve their work. As a result, errors and misconceptions persist and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and what they can achieve are not high enough. The learning needs of different ability pupils are frequently not met well. Teachers do not routinely provide most-able pupils with necessary challenge to enable them to fulfil their potential.

- Pupils have limited opportunities to practise and improve their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers have a secure subject knowledge.
- Teaching develops and strengthens pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Younger pupils use their knowledge and understanding of phonics well to read difficult or unfamiliar words. Pupils show a love of reading.
- The quality of teaching in artistic subjects is strong. Teachers are highly knowledgeable and skilful. Teachers' guidance and expertise helps pupils to make strong progress in showing expression and emotion in their dancing. Pupils collaborate well to help each other improve their work. Pupils enjoy singing and their stage performances are of high quality.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Mutual respect between staff and pupils and among pupils is strong. This enhances pupils' self-confidence and their enjoyment of coming to school and learning.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations. They know, for example, how to keep themselves safe online. They understand the dangers associated with cyberbullying, extremist views and radicalisation. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, older pupils discuss and debate knowledgeably the potential risks of using different types of social media.
- Pupils are taught how to eat healthily and how to lead healthy lifestyles. Physical activities in the artistic curriculum contribute well to their physical well-being.
- Pupils understand the different forms of that bullying can take. Pupils told inspectors that bullying, racism, sexism and homophobia are rare. The school's own records of behaviour confirm this. Pupils said that if bullying does occur, they are confident that staff will deal with any issues effectively. Pupils said they always feel safe at school.
- Pupils are respectful towards the cultures and faiths of others and have tolerant attitudes. Older pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the protected characteristics.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills through taking up different roles and responsibilities in the school are limited.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous. They respond well to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils understand the school's new behaviour policy well, including the school's rewards and sanctions. They interact well with each other and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils said that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils' conduct in class and around the school is good. Pupils generally take care of the

school and there is very little litter.

- Pupils are punctual and school records show that most attend well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress overall is weaker in the academic curriculum than in the artistic curriculum. This is because teaching in the academic subjects is weaker and insufficient time is allocated to the academic curriculum.
- Pupils who fall behind are not identified and provided with additional support quickly enough. Current pupils' work shows that teachers do not routinely take pupils' starting points into account when setting tasks. Sometimes, teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained at least grade 4 in GCSE English was above average and broadly average at grade 5 and above. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils who attained at least grade 4 in GCSE was below average and well below average at grade 5 and above.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling was in line with the national average. However, a lower-than-average proportion of pupils reached the higher standard in these subjects.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable to help them achieve higher standards.
- Younger pupils' understanding of phonics is secure and this helps them to enjoy and do well in reading.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills across different subjects.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted well. Pupils' writing improves because they regularly write at length and for different purposes.
- The artistic curriculum is particularly strong in building pupils' self-esteem and confidence. In 2018, pupils' outcomes in modern, tap, ballet and musical theatre were strong.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate careers advice and guidance. Pupils typically make strong progress in the artistic subjects. They leave the school well prepared for higher educational college auditions and careers in the performing arts, to which they aspire.

School details

Unique reference number	101948
DfE registration number	307/6050
Inspection number	10092444

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	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Barbara Speake
Chair	Shereen Boucher
Headteacher	David Speake
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,560–9,000
Telephone number	020 8743 1306
Website	www.barbaraspeake.com
Email address	enquiries@barbaraspeake.com
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 November 2017

Information about this school

- Barbara Speake Stage School is an independent day school for boys and girls. It specialises in the teaching of the performing arts as part of its artistic curriculum. Pupils learn English, mathematics, science and a humanities subject as part of their academic curriculum.
- The proprietor has been running classes at the premises since 1945. The school was established in 1963.
- The school is registered for 140 pupils aged 4 to 16 years. There are currently 71 pupils on roll. There are no children aged four on roll at the school.

- The school has no separate early years provision and no provision for two-year-olds.
- The lower junior school consists of a mixed-age class with pupils aged 5 to 7.
- The upper junior school is a mixed-age key stage 2 class with pupils aged 8 to 11.
- The senior school consists of individual classes for each year group from Years 7 to 11.
- The school aims to promote the skills of creativity, education, talent, imagination and artistic development. Pupils regularly receive opportunities to work professionally in the performance industry.
- Pupils work towards the International Dance Teachers Association (IDTA) examinations in four dance disciplines, as well as the London College of Music Examinations (LCM) in singing.
- There have been recent changes in teaching staff, particularly in the senior leadership team.
- The school is going through some changes in relation to its leadership structure and staff recruitment.
- There is a new and very recently appointed governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has no religious affiliation.
- The school was last inspected in November 2017, when it was judged to be requiring improvement. It received an emergency visit in 11 December 2018 in response to multiple complaints which raised concerns about various aspects of the school's work. Due to unmet independent school standards, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to produce an action plan to address the unmet standards at the emergency inspection. The action plan was subsequently evaluated on 13 March 2019 and was rejected by the DfE.
- The DfE requested this inspection to consider the school's complaint policy and how leaders respond to complaints.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in all classes and year groups. Most of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Work in pupils' books was reviewed to check their work and progress.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, headteacher and school manager. A meeting was also held with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to pupils in all key stages. A meeting was held with staff to discuss professional development, behaviour and safety issues, including safeguarding. A telephone call was made to the local authority designated officer to discuss the school's referrals and any safeguarding concerns.
- Inspectors checked the school's health and safety and welfare arrangements, and toured the premises. All the independent school standards were checked.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's pre-employment checks on staff and looked at pupils' attendance and behaviour records. The inspectors also examined the school's policies and documents in relation to the independent school standards, including information on safety and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met and spoke with 13 parents in the school playground at the beginning of the school day. The inspection took account of 23 responses to Parent View and two free-text responses.
- There were no responses to the staff or pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted 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; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

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.
- **The correct safeguarding procedure has not been met.**
- **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 is not met.**

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