

Flexible Learning Centre

23 All Saints' Road, Hockley, Birmingham B18 5QB

Inspection dates

6 November 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- At the last inspection in January 2019, inspectors noted that the school's safeguarding policy was out of date and did not take account of government guidelines. This policy was rewritten in March 2019 and reviewed in September 2019. The policy now meets all current government requirements. The policy is available to parents and carers through the school website.
- All members of staff currently at the school have received a copy of the updated safeguarding policy. There is also a copy available in the staff room at each of the school sites. This policy is scheduled to be reviewed annually. Training has been delivered to all staff to ensure that they are familiar with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Previously, inspectors found that there were no complete records of when staff received safeguarding training and that staff lacked a clear understanding of how to recognise potential concerns about a pupil.
- Throughout the spring and summer terms, all members of staff completed a wide range of safeguarding training programmes. These included safeguarding level 1, the 'Prevent' duty, faith-based abuse, child sexual exploitation, recognising signs and symptoms of abuse, recording and reporting concerns, and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2018 and 2019.
- Since April 2019, the school has maintained a computerised training spreadsheet. This records all safeguarding training completed by all members of staff, along with dates when training needs to be refreshed. There is also a calendar for this academic year showing the safeguarding training that is to be delivered.
- Staff new to the school receive safeguarding induction training, including information about the updated safeguarding policy and the role of the designated safeguarding lead. They also receive level 1 safeguarding, e-safety and the 'Prevent' duty training, plus the latest 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document and copies of relevant welfare, health and safety policies.
- Weekly safeguarding bulletins are sent to all members of staff, keeping them up to date with local and national safeguarding issues. These bulletins also contain reminders and

other important information. Staff say that they value these bulletins and find them useful.

- Members of staff at all levels are now confident and knowledgeable about safeguarding. They are vigilant, know how to record and pass on concerns, and regard safeguarding as a priority. They are aware of the particular potential risks faced by pupils at the school.
- Previously, inspectors found that it was unclear how well safeguarding concerns raised by teachers were followed up.
- In the spring term, the school appointed a new, experienced, designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL is supported by three deputy DSLs, one at each school site.
- The DSL is responsible for managing concerns raised by members of staff, maintaining pupils' safeguarding records and liaising with families and external agencies.
- Record-keeping is robust and referrals to external agencies are made in a timely way. Records are well detailed and a full chronology of actions is made. The DSL is tenacious in securing support so that pupils and their families are now well supported. Staff are kept informed of how their referrals have been followed up.
- The DSL provides a half-termly report to the headteacher recording training delivered, referrals made, policies reviewed and any other relevant safeguarding information.
- These previously unmet standards are now met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- Previously, inspectors found that the school's single central record was incomplete and that the headteacher could not demonstrate that all relevant safer recruitment checks had been carried out on staff. They also found that the recruitment of new members of staff was disorganised and incomplete, that some application forms contained no records of referees and that some references could not be located.
- During this inspection, the school's single central record and staff recruitment files were scrutinised. The single central record is now complete and compliant with statutory requirements. It covers all the staff working across all three sites. It covers all the checks that need to be carried out. All entries are dated and identify which member of staff carried out the checks.
- The school does not have governors. The headteacher is the only proprietor.
- A range of recruitment files were checked for staff at all levels, including those staff who are newly appointed.
- Each file contains a checklist of safer recruitment checks showing that all required checks have been carried out. There is documentary evidence in each folder to confirm these checks have been completed. These include the completed application form, proof

of address, photographic identification, evidence of right to work in the UK, copies of certificates and qualifications, overseas checks carried out where necessary, two references and a record of medical fitness.

- The school is following its safer recruitment policy.
- These previously unmet standards have now been met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy was rewritten in March 2019 and reviewed in September 2019. It now meets all current government requirements. The policy is available to parents through the school website.
- These previously unmet standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- In January 2019, inspectors found that the headteacher, who is also the proprietor and owner of the school, did not demonstrate a strong understanding of the independent school standards. In addition, the headteacher had not taken appropriate action to ensure that these standards were met consistently.
- Following this inspection, the headteacher acted swiftly to effect the necessary changes to enable the school to meet the standards identified as being unmet. The headteacher submitted an action plan in the spring term 2019 to the Department for Education (DfE). This action plan was approved.
- All of the actions within the plan had been completed by the end of the summer term 2019. The school has maintained documentary evidence to show this. This evidence was scrutinised during this inspection.
- The headteacher now has a clear understanding of the independent school standards.
- Leaders have now established robust and systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that the independent school standards are likely to be met consistently over time.
- The actions taken by leaders have ensured that safeguarding is a priority. Staff understand the systems well and are well trained and knowledgeable. Pupils are safeguarded. The school's safeguarding policy is fully implemented.
- The school's safer recruitment policy is robust and is fully implemented.
- The school provides a safe environment for pupils and staff. The school no longer uses any shared accommodation.
- All of the standards in this part are now met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an accessibility plan and endeavours to ensure that the premises and curriculum are accessible to all pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

- Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c).
- Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b).
- Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c).

School details

Unique reference number	135561
DfE registration number	330/6128
Inspection number	10114621

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	N/A
Number of part-time pupils	6
Proprietor	Shamim Akhtar
Headteacher	Shamim Akhtar
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8 per hour for full-time pupils (25 hours per week) £10 per hour for part-time pupils (fewer than 25 hours per week) £12 per hour for pupils on the school's roll
Telephone number	0121 554 7918
Website	www.flexiblelearning.org.uk
Email address	info@flexiblelearning.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	28–30 November 2017

Information about this school

- Flexible Learning Centre is an independent day school for pupils between the ages of 13 and 16 who have experienced significant disruption to their formal learning. The school provides an alternative education for pupils who cannot attend a mainstream school and have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- The school is located on three sites in Birmingham and staff work across all three sites. The school no longer uses any shared premises.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school no longer provides tuition for primary-aged pupils. All pupils attending the school are between the ages of 13 and 16. Pupils only attend the school during the school working day.
- The school's main address is different to that shown on the government's 'get information about schools' website. The correct address for the school is 23 All Saints' Road, Hockley, Birmingham B18 5QB. The school no longer uses the premises at 204 Slade Road. The headteacher has informed the DfE about this change.
- Most pupils attending the school are dual-registered and remain on the roll of their host school.
- The headteacher is also the proprietor and owner of the school.
- The school opened in 2008. It received its last full inspection in November 2017 and was judged to be a good school at that time. The DfE commissioned an inspection in January 2019 because of concerns raised about the welfare, health and safety of pupils. This inspection was carried out by Ofsted on 30 January 2019 and found that a significant number of the independent school standards were not being met.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the inspection on 30 January 2019, which found that a significant number of the independent school standards were not being met.
- The inspection was also commissioned in response to several complaints.
- This inspection was conducted without notice, by one inspector, over one day.
- Following the inspection in January 2019, the DfE requested the school to submit an action plan to demonstrate how it would rectify the unmet standards. This action plan was approved in May 2019.
- The action plan was checked as part of this performance monitoring inspection.
- I met with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and staff from across the school's three sites. I spoke informally to a small number of pupils.
- I reviewed a range of documentation, including: safeguarding policies and related information; the school's single central record; and the staff personnel files.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to conduct an analysis. No parents were spoken to during this inspection.

Inspection team

Janet Satchwell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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