

Marathon Science School

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

Inspection date: 22 March 2021

Context of the monitoring visit

Ofsted conducted this on-site visit after receiving responses from children to the recent Ofsted point-in-time survey. Children raised concerns with regards to access to the local area, the restricted use of mobile phones and the quality of the food.

This visit included the inspector holding meetings with children, the school's independent listener, boarding house staff and the headteacher. The inspector spoke face to face with 19 children. Four parents were also spoken to on the phone.

Summary of findings

No evidence was found to substantiate the concerns. Children receive a good standard of care. However, shortfalls were identified regarding the recording of incidents and one aspect of the living environment.

Children commented that they understand the school's policy regarding the restricted use of mobile phones. They confirmed that the restrictions were clearly explained to them prior to their arrival and noted that they valued the positive impact that this has on their academic studies.

The food provided to children is varied and offers at least two healthy choices each mealtime. Staff strive, and generally succeed, to support the individual tastes of a culturally diverse group of children. Children are consulted on the weekly menu and learn the value of healthy eating.

Since the last inspection, the boarding house environment has been improved. Shower rooms on two floors have been completely refurbished. However, despite other improvements, one child's bed was found to be not large enough, leaving him uncomfortable at night. The head of boarding informed the inspector that a new bed would be ordered immediately.

Recordings of incidents involving children offer limited detail and evaluation. For example, one entry concerning an altercation between children had not been completed in full. This meant that there was no recorded outcome to the incident in question. This means it is difficult for managers to track the outcome of incidents or the development of staff.

Children told us that they were happy in the boarding house. They said that they enjoy the opportunity to spend time with friends while benefiting from the structured routines provided to them.

A new head of boarding began in the role in September 2020. He moved from another position in boarding within the school and is presently mentored by the previous head of boarding. The new head of boarding has completed a management qualification specific to boarding schools and is a designated safeguarding lead. There have been no other staff changes since the last Ofsted inspection in 2019.

Feedback from parents was universally positive. Parents spoken with said that they value the impact that boarding has on their child's academic progress. They also highlighted this as a way of developing social skills and accessing a broader choice of activities.

Staff have tried to reduce the impact of the pandemic on children. Additional resources, such as new table tennis tables and an air hockey table, have been purchased to help children to socialise safely together. Children commented that they are excited by the introduction of a new Thursday night cooking club.

The rules of the boarding house are appropriate. Boarding staff said that they strictly adhere to government guidance relating to the pandemic. Some children have struggled to adjust to the change of routine, with so much time spent in the boarding house environment. Staff offer children supervised trips to local shops whenever possible.

Because of the limited scope of the visit, the recommendations set at the last inspection were not assessed on this occasion. Two additional recommendations, relating to the quality of case recordings and the boarding house environment, have been made following this visit.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all supervision sessions with boarding staff are appropriately recorded.
- The registered person should ensure that performance appraisals consider using feedback from children and other professionals to offer a more comprehensive assessment of performance.
- The registered person should ensure that a record is kept of all complaints, allowing the more efficient tracking of concerns.
- The registered person should ensure that a record is kept of all sanctions given to children, allowing the monitoring of behaviours.
- The registered person should ensure that the environment is regularly reviewed to verify that it is meeting the needs of children, for example, that beds are big enough.
- The registered person should regularly review the quality of case recordings to ensure that incidents are fully evaluated.

Inspector

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

Information about this school

Marathon Science School is a boarding school for boys. The school is situated in Lewisham and the boarding provision is in Shoreditch. The boarding provision is located within a mosque complex. The school opened in September 2009. The school is registered for 144 pupils. The boarding site can currently accommodate a maximum of 120 boarders between the ages of 10 and 16 years. There are presently 55 pupils, of whom 54 are boarders. Six boarders attend a local schools sixth form and are included on the rolls of both the school and the sixth-form provision. The boys usually go home to their families on alternate weekends. Most of the boys come from London boroughs, although some come from further afield. The proprietors are four trustees of the Seven Hill Education Trust, a registered charitable trust. The school was established with the aim of providing a 24-hour curriculum inspired by Islamic values.

School details

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

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Type of school	Boarding school
Number of boarders on roll	54
Gender of boarders	Male
Age range of boarders	10 to 19
Headteacher	Uzeyir Onur
Date of previous boarding inspection	14 October 2019
Telephone number	02072 313232
Email address	uzeyironur@marathonschool.com

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