

Freshsteps Independent school

Innova House, Kenetic Crescent, Enfield, Edmonton EN3 7XH

Inspection dates

24 March 2021

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

- The proprietor/headteacher is trained as a designated safeguarding leader and in safer recruitment. She has a secure understanding of safeguarding practice. She makes sure that all staff undertake relevant training based on the latest government guidance. The proprietor has made sure that all the relevant employment checks have been made on the staff, including checks under section 128 of the 2008 Act.
- The school's culture of safeguarding is strong. At daily meetings, staff share and discuss any concerns about pupils that might have arisen during the day. Practices, such as in working with external agencies and managing concerns in a timely fashion, are suitable.
- Records, and staff with whom I met, confirm that they have annual safeguarding training and receive regular updates during the year. Staff know how to use the school's reporting systems effectively. They log concerns, be they about safeguarding, welfare, mental health, or behaviour issues. Leaders check the incoming information and follow up with diligence.
- Staff are aware of the school's whistleblowing procedures. They are confident that senior leaders take their concerns seriously.
- Pupils learn about risk and how to keep themselves safe and avoid danger. Pupils told me that they have a trusted adult who they can approach with confidence if they have any concerns.
- Leaders help parents understand the vulnerabilities and dangers to which their children may be susceptible. They guide parents on how they can help their children keep safe, such as when using the internet and how to avoid grooming.
- Copies of policies, including for safeguarding children, are available on the school's website.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

- The school has a suitable behaviour policy and leaders keep records of sanctions. Pupils appreciate the rewards they get for good behaviour and work. They are well aware of the range of possible sanctions for misbehaviours.
- All staff attend an annual two-day training course on how to de-escalate challenging behavioural situations. The training includes guidance on 'positive handling' so that physical intervention is used minimally. It is only used in extreme cases and as a last resort. The school has agreed protocols. For instance, any physical intervention is only ever carried out by two members of staff. A senior leader is immediately alerted to attend. They check that all concerned heed the agreed rules and make sure that staff inform parents as soon as possible. Records show that staff use this sanction rarely. Staff and pupils concerned reflect, in writing, on the incident. The behaviour manager then facilitates a reconciliation meeting with the pupil and members of staff concerned. They analyse what triggered the need for physical restraint and agree strategies that will help avoid a recurrence.
- Pupils who feel they need some 'time out' to calm down can choose to use the reflection room. The room is designed to meet pupils' sensory needs and to encourage reflection and calming down. An adult is usually present in the room. However, if a pupil wants to be alone, the adult stands outside the door, looking in through the glass panel. These arrangements mean that an adult observes the pupil throughout, thereby ensuring the pupil's safety.
- Members of staff say they feel well supported by senior leaders in managing pupils' behaviour. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), for instance, gives staff guidance to help them understand what triggers might cause each pupil to misbehave. The guidance includes suggested strategies for trying to avoid the triggers and on how to respond to misconduct to help restore calm.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders ensure that staff supervise pupils from the moment pupils arrive at school until they leave. There are routinely two members of staff in every class and several staff on duty during lunchtimes and social times.
- The independent school standard checked in this part continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

All Paragraphs

- The proprietor has continued to make sure that the school is compliant with the independent school standards checked during this inspection.
- Through the curriculum, use of a range of therapists and strong supervision and pastoral care, the proprietor continues to effectively support pupils' safety, well-being and welfare. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters and feel supported by leaders. Leaders follow up any concerns raised in a timely manner.
- The independent school standard checked in this part continues to be met.

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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135839
DfE registration number	308/6305
Inspection number	10183141

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	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Diane Anderson
Headteacher	Diane Anderson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,000
Telephone number	020 8803 5827
Website	www.freshstepseducationcentre.org.uk
Email address	head@freshstepseducationcentre.org.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	26–28 February 2020

Information about this school

- Freshsteps provides education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities that are primarily related to social, emotional and mental health needs. A few pupils have complex needs.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher.
- Pupils who attend the school have typically experienced difficulties in mainstream schools or have been absent from education for a long time.

- The school is registered to take up to 80 pupils from the ages of five to 18.
- There are currently no students attending the sixth form.
- All pupils at the school are in placements funded by the local authority and have education, health and care plans.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's last standard inspection was in February 2020. Its overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency 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.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to concerns raised about safeguarding and leadership and management.
- The inspection was conducted with 30 minutes' notice.
- I reported against some of the requirements contained within part 3 and part 8 of the independent school standards.
- I met with the school's headteacher, who is also the proprietor, and the behaviour management leader.
- I met with a group of pupils and a group of staff. I also spoke by telephone with the local authority's designated officer for safeguarding.
- I toured the premises, observed pupils at lunchtime, and reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding and behaviour.
- There were no recent survey responses on Ofsted's Parent View.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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