

The Bridge SEN School

148–150 and 167 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5TY

Inspection date

4 November 2022

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The previous standard inspection in 2021 found that safeguarding, including recruitment procedures, was weak. Staff were trained to understand how to safeguard adults, but not pupils. Leaders did not pay regard to government guidance.
- Safeguarding requirements are now met because leaders have reviewed and strengthened the school's approach to recruiting and training staff. The recruitment process reflects statutory guidance. Staff now receive suitable and timely training in both safeguarding and physical intervention.
- There is a more consistent approach to the de-escalation, positive handling and restraint of pupils. Leaders and staff now have a suitable working knowledge and understanding of the latest statutory guidance, as outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2022).
- As a result, safeguarding arrangements are now effective in keeping pupils safe.

Paragraph 11

- At the time of the previous inspection, a suitable health and safety policy had not been written.
- This standard is now met because an appropriate policy has been written and is being implemented well.

Paragraph 15

- The admissions register was previously not compliant because it did not include all the required information.
- It is now compliant because it includes all the required information, including pupils' previous schools and their addresses.

Paragraph 16–16(b)

- At the time of the previous inspection, a suitable risk assessment policy had not been written.
- This standard is now met because the school's suitable policy is now supported by appropriate written risk assessments of both premises.
- The independent school standards (the standards) checked in this part are now met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(iii) 18(3), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b)

- The previous inspection found that the safer recruitment process did not reflect government guidance. The record of checks on staff suitability was not compliant. Some staff were working in the school without leaders making sure that all of the required checks had been correctly completed or recorded.
- The record of checks on staff suitability is now compliant. The inspection found that all the required checks are now undertaken and recorded accurately using a new online system.
- The standards checked in this part are now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 27, 27(b)

- The previous inspection identified a lack of outdoor lighting. There were also no medical room or shower and changing facilities at the 167 Old Kent Road premises.
- This inspection confirms that changing, shower and medical room facilities are now available at both sites. New outdoor lighting has also been installed.
- The standards checked in this part are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 31(1), 31(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy is available online.
- The standard checked in this part continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The previous inspection found that leadership, management and governance were weak. The proprietor was failing to meet their obligations. Some statutory requirements, including the independent school standards, were not met.
- This inspection found leaders to have taken decisive action since the previous inspection. As a result, the vast majority of the previously unmet standards are now met, including in relation to safeguarding and paragraph 34(1)(c).

- However, although leaders have been successful in focusing on improving some aspects of the school, especially safeguarding arrangements, they are not demonstrating the knowledge required to meet all the independent school standards consistently. Leaders are still not paying sufficient attention to detail. For example, amendments had to be made during the inspection to resolve inaccuracies in policies, and to ensure website compliance.
- The standards relating to leadership and management, in paragraph 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b), remain unmet.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school's accessibility plan was incomplete. It did not include planned actions to make the curriculum and information accessible.
- Leaders have reviewed and updated the school's accessibility plan. It now includes suitable actions to improve access in all the required areas, including the curriculum and written information.
- This requirement is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	147977
DfE registration number	210/6012
Inspection number	10260531

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	Secondary day special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	14 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Edith Eneanya-Bonito
Headteacher	James Nuttall
Annual fees (day pupils)	£35,000 to £95,000
Telephone number	020 7703 8587
Website	www.thebridge-school.co.uk
Email address	admin@thebridge-school.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	24 to 26 November 2021

Information about this school

- The Bridge Special Education Needs School is an independent special day school in the London Borough of Southwark.
- Pupils have a range of complex needs, including autism spectrum disorder. Many pupils are non-verbal. All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed and funded by a range of local authorities.
- The school caters for pupils of compulsory school age at its main premises at 148–150 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5TY.

- Students aged 18 to 25 attend the premises opposite, at 167 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5TY.
- The proprietor has purchased new premises in the London Borough of Croydon. Once refurbishment works are completed, and the relevant material change permissions sought and obtained from the Department for Education, leaders' intention is to relocate all pupils to these premises in 2023.
- The school has a sole proprietor, who delegates governance to a governing body.
- The school's previous inspection in November 2021 was its first full inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

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 school's first progress monitoring inspection since its first full inspection in November 2021. The inspection was conducted without notice.
- Following the previous full inspection, leaders were asked to submit an action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted as not acceptable in July 2022 and was subsequently rejected by the Department for Education.
- The focus of the inspection was to check whether the school complied with particular requirements within parts 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspection took account of a range of evidence to consider leaders' work to improve safeguarding, health and safety, and the premises.
- The inspector met with the headteacher regularly throughout the inspection. He also met with two teachers. On tours of both premises, he observed the school's pupils interacting with staff.
- There were no recent responses to consider on Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the 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.
- 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.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;

- 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person–
- 18(2)(c)(iii) the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person’s appointment.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff (“S”) appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
 - 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S’s right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff (“S”), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order,
 - including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 27 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

- 27(b) external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises.

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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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