

Inspection of Right Choice Independent Special School

First Floor, 1–4 Beresford Square, Woolwich, London SE18 6BB

Inspection dates:

27 to 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. Pupils are not kept safe at this school.

Leaders' expectations of pupils are far too low. The curriculum lacks ambition and is limited. It does not meet pupils' needs. Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive high-quality opportunities to fulfil their interests and talents. They have not organised extra-curricular clubs or other wider provision for pupils. As a result, pupils are very poorly prepared for the next steps in their education.

Few pupils receive a full-time education here. The majority of pupils on the school's roll do not attend the school premises. Most are on part-time timetables or access no education at all. This means most pupils spend more time at home or in their local community during school hours than they do at school. This puts them at risk. The timetable for those who spend full days on site includes too much 'free time' so that valuable learning time is wasted.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are poor. Leaders have not established a consistent approach for staff to respond to behaviour incidents. For example, staff do not consistently follow up pupils' use of rude or abusive language. Bullying is not dealt with effectively so that it is resolved. Leaders deal with poor behaviour, including bullying, by putting pupils on part-time timetables or by providing permanent off-site tuition, for example in local libraries.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and the proprietor have failed to plan an ambitious curriculum that ensures pupils achieve well, including for students of sixth-form age and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have not ensured that curriculum content is well sequenced. Subject planning does not show what knowledge and skills pupils should learn from Years 8 to 13. Leaders have not checked whether what they intend pupils to learn in each subject is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum. Teaching is disjointed, and pupils do not have the opportunity to build knowledge securely over time.

Although the school's curriculum includes all the required areas of learning, most pupils access a fraction of the available subjects. Most pupils do not attend school regularly. Some opt out of subjects on the timetable that they do not wish to study. When pupils choose not to attend subject classes, leaders allow them to play in the games room or go home. The curriculum for pupils who receive tuition off site is very limited. Some of these pupils receive tuition from non-subject specialists for only one hour per day.

Staff do not work effectively to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND are poorly supported. Their needs are not identified well. Few teaching staff are subject specialists. Staff often teach multiple subjects but do not have a good knowledge of

the subjects they teach, including reading, English and mathematics. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read, and those who have fallen behind are not identified and helped to gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident fluent readers. Leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that staff receive effective support to develop their knowledge of the subjects they teach. Staff do not follow a well-planned curriculum and have a limited understanding of how to present subject matter clearly. They do not know how to check precisely what pupils know and understand.

Pupils' behaviour is often unsettled and hinders all pupils' learning. Leaders do not provide staff with the support they need to manage behaviour effectively. They use long-term off-site tuition for selected pupils as a solution to behaviour issues. Policies for behaviour and sanctions are out of date and provide little guidance for staff. Leaders do not keep reliable records of any sanctions imposed. Some pupils felt that staff applied rules differently from one pupil to another. Few pupils attend school regularly. When pupils do not attend, leaders do not take sufficiently rapid action or seek to work in partnership with local authorities who place pupils at the school.

Leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that pupils receive impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance to help them prepare for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Some pupils receive careers advice only in Year 11, which is too late. Pupils, including students of sixth-form age, are unclear about their next steps. Work experience opportunities are very limited.

The school's programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education ensures that pupils learn about equality, diversity and fundamental British values. The small number of pupils who attend rock climbing sessions said that these are helping them to develop their confidence. Other pupils benefit from counselling. However, leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development more widely, including their independent living skills, is very limited.

The quality and capacity of the school's leadership are weak. The proprietor has not made arrangements to check the quality of leaders' work and identify priorities for improvement. Many independent school standards are not met. Leaders have not made sure that the admission register is compliant because details of pupils' previous schools are missing. Attendance information is inaccurate. Annual income and expenditure statements for pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans are not completed.

Fire extinguishers have not been serviced since June 2020, and fire doors are not kept shut. The building's fire alarm system displayed a fault throughout the inspection. Leaders could not provide inspectors with fire safety certificates or an external fire risk assessment. They have not ensured that hot water supplies are regulated, and therefore these present a scalding risk to users. First-aid and health and safety policies are out of date. Leaders and the proprietor do not have a risk assessment policy, and the assessment of any risks is weak. For example, risk assessments for external activities take no account of pupils' specific needs.

The school's complaints policy contains inaccurate information. Little of the required information is made available to parents, including on the school's website.

Representatives from local authorities placing pupils at the school, and paying the fees for these places, expressed concerns about the school. These include poor communication, the overuse of part-time timetables, and pupils' poor attendance. They are rightly concerned that some pupils are not accessing any education whatsoever.

Leaders and the proprietor have failed to fulfil the statutory relationships and sex education (RSE) requirements. For example, they have not written the required policy, or consulted with parents and carers.

The school is not compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 because leaders and the proprietor have not written an accessibility plan.

Staff shared no concerns about workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders are failing in their duty to protect pupils from harm.

Leaders and the proprietor have not updated the school's safeguarding policy since 2017. It is not available on the school's website. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have not renewed their training within the required timescales. They last completed enhanced-level training in 2016. Staff do not know who has leadership responsibility for safeguarding. Leaders and the proprietor have not provided staff with safeguarding training in light of the latest statutory safeguarding guidance. Leaders began to take action, including by issuing staff with Part 1 of 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2022), during the inspection.

Leaders do not have a system to log concerns fully or accurately to document the actions they take. Records of important safeguarding information either do not exist or are stored in books and emails or on portable storage devices. This informal approach does not follow the record-keeping guidance set out in national guidance.

The process for recruiting staff does not pay regard to government guidance, including in relation to additional overseas vetting checks, interviews and professional references. For example, references from friends and colleagues have been accepted.

Leaders have not followed statutory duties such as referring serious concerns about adults to the local authority's designated officer (LADO) and to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Most pupils spend more time at home or in the local community during school hours than they do at school. This also puts their welfare at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Safeguarding is not effective for many reasons. Leaders' failings put pupils at risk. Leaders should urgently review the use of part-time timetables and off-site education. They should write and publish a suitable policy, train staff and improve safeguarding arrangements, ensuring they take full account of all the latest statutory guidance. Leaders should review and strengthen the recruitment process. They should ensure that concerns raised and actions taken are recorded. Leaders should ensure that they know, and fulfil, their statutory safeguarding duties.
- Some pupils do not access any education whatsoever. Others have persistently low attendance. Some attendance information shared with placing authorities is inflated and inaccurate. Leaders should take urgent action to review these placements with placing local authorities.
- The admission register is not compliant and attendance information is inaccurate and unreliable. Leaders should review The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and ensure full compliance.
- The fire safety standard is not met. Leaders should ensure that all the required fire safety checks are completed on time, in line with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Leaders should have access to all fire safety certificates and risk assessments for the shared building. Doors marked 'fire door, keep shut' should be kept closed. The fire alarm system should be fixed. Fire extinguishers should be serviced as soon as possible. Annual checks should always be carried out on time.
- Leaders and the proprietor have not written a suitable risk assessment policy. Risk assessments are not thorough enough. Leaders should write and implement an appropriate risk assessment policy. They should ensure that all activities are assessed for the specific risks pertaining to the pupils taking part.
- Hot water supplies are not regulated. Leaders and the proprietor should ensure that hot water supplies do not present a scalding risk to pupils or staff.
- The quality of schemes of work is weak. Some subject plans are not in place. Sequencing of curriculum content is based on the achievement of unit awards or qualification outcomes only. There is no coherence between what leaders expect pupils to learn as they progress from Years 8 to 13. Checks on pupils' learning are superficial and assessment information is not used to inform future teaching. Leaders provide no professional training for staff in relation to pedagogy and curriculum design. Leaders have not provided staff with training in working therapeutically with pupils with SEND. Leaders and the proprietor should thoroughly review the school's curriculum, assessment and arrangements for

training staff. They should ensure that staff are trained to teach a sequenced curriculum that helps pupils to learn well in all subjects.

- Pupils' behaviour is managed inconsistently. Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure pupils' good behaviour. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are poor. Leaders should take action to ensure that all pupils receive a high-quality, full-time education at the school site. They should ensure that all staff are trained to understand the root causes of challenging behaviour, manage behaviours consistently, and challenge any derogatory language appropriately. They should also ensure that incidents of serious misbehaviour and bullying, and any sanctions imposed as a result, are logged.
- Arrangements for pupils' personal development are too limited. There is no extra-curricular offer, such as clubs. Opportunities for educational visits, visitors and experiences to enrich the curriculum are sparse. As part of a curriculum review, leaders should consider how they enrich learning to provide pupils with greater opportunities to develop them spiritually, morally, culturally and socially, and prepare them for their future adult lives.
- The RSE requirements are not met. Parents have not been consulted on the RSE curriculum in line with statutory requirements. There is no policy. The curriculum has not been checked to ensure full coverage of the requirements. Leaders should ensure that a policy is written and published, and that parents are consulted and provided with the opportunity to withdraw their children from sex education. They should review the curriculum to ensure full coverage of the RSE requirements.
- Much of the required information is missing from the school's website, such as key policies and proprietor information. Many policies are out of date and contain inaccurate information. This includes the complaints policy. Information such as the number of formal complaints received in the preceding year is not made available. Leaders do not provide the required annual statement of income and expenditure to placing authorities for pupils with EHC plans. Leaders and the proprietor should ensure that all the required information and policies are updated, accurate and made available.
- The proprietor has no systems in place to check on the effectiveness of leaders' work. All aspects need better oversight for the school to improve. Leaders and the proprietor should ensure that procedures are put in place to check on the quality of their work.
- Leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Those not met are listed in the annex to this report. Leaders and the proprietor should know and understand all the standards and take action to ensure they are met consistently.
- Leaders and the proprietor have not written an accessibility plan. In compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, leaders should produce and publish a plan that outlines leaders' intentions to improve access to the curriculum, written information and physical environment.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	134402
DfE registration number	203/6300
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10242755
Type of school	Secondary day special school and alternative provider
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	12 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	4
Number of part-time pupils	11
Proprietor	Banjo Aromolaran
Headteacher	Banjo Aromolaran
Annual fees (day pupils)	£17,000 to £30,000
Telephone number	020 8854 6229
Website	www.right-choice.co.uk
Email address	rcp@rcpc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 June 2018

Information about this school

- This school mostly provides full-time, permanent placements to pupils with EHC plans, or those with SEND in need of one. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school also operates from a variety of separate premises, including pupils' homes and local libraries. It also provides temporary placements as an alternative provider.
- The school works with other alternative providers including Ilderton Project, The Archway Project, Hadlow College, Flower Skills, and Thamesmead Recreational. However, at the time of this inspection, no use was being made of any of these providers.
- The proprietor listed on the Department of Education register of educational establishments, known as 'Get information about schools' is incorrect. The sole proprietor is also the school's headteacher, Banjo Aromolaran.
- The school is in breach of its registration agreement because pupils are receiving off-site tuition and are not receiving full-time education at the school's site, which has the registered capacity of 32 pupils.
- The school's most recent inspection was a standard inspection in June 2018.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This standard inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these areas: English, mathematics, physical education and PSHE education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the subject with the curriculum leader, visited all available lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, spoke to staff, and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence to consider pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour. They spoke with pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with all the school's senior leaders regularly, including the sole proprietor, who is also the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with the school's safeguarding leaders and reviewed a range of safeguarding information, including the pre-appointment checks on staff.

- The lead inspector communicated regularly with the LADO at Greenwich local authority throughout the inspection. He also spoke with senior managers in both of the school's largest placing authorities.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, and responses to the surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Lloyd

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),

- 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
 - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
- 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

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.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- 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.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid 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)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 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.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(2)(b) either-
 - 32(2)(b)(i) where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13;

- 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-
- 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

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.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have not written and published an accessibility plan.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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