

London Steiner School

9 Weir Road, Balham, London SW12 0LT

Inspection date

31 January 2023

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

Paragraphs 7–7(b) and 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- Safeguarding was judged to be effective at the previous inspection. This emergency inspection confirms that this area of the school's work continues to be taken seriously. Leaders and staff are suitably trained in light of the latest statutory guidance. The school's policy reflects this guidance, and is published online. Pupils confirmed that they feel safe in school. Leaders record and organise the suitable actions they take in response to concerns generally well, though this could be more consistent.
- These independent school standards ('the standards') continue to be met.

Paragraphs 9 and 10

- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies, published within a 'behaviour handbook' are generally suitable and implemented well. Where there are incidents of serious misbehaviour or bullying, these are recorded alongside the actions taken, including any sanctions imposed.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraph 11

- The school's health and safety policy, published online, is not fit for purpose. It is marked as a draft policy and is a poorly edited template. It contains some inaccurate information. A more suitable policy is currently being drafted but has not been approved or implemented. Some health and safety monitoring, such as checks on water safety and portable electronic appliances, are very overdue.
- This standard is no longer met.

Paragraph 12

- The external fire risk assessment undertaken in February 2022 identified several high priority actions, with May 2022 deadlines. These have not been reviewed and completed. Some of the required fire safety checks, such as weekly alarm and

monthly emergency lighting tests, are not being carried out and recorded. These failings put the building's users at potential risk of harm.

- This standard is no longer met.

Paragraph 13

- There are plenty of trained first aiders and a suitable medical room facility. Records of accidents and any first aid given are suitably kept. However, leaders have not written, published and implemented a first aid policy.
- This standard is no longer met.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils learn in very small classes. They are appropriately supervised throughout the school day.
- This standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 15

- Leaders maintain suitable admission and attendance registers, in line with the legal requirements.
- This standard continues to be met.

Paragraph 16–16(b)

- Leaders have not written, published and implemented a risk assessment policy. There is no written risk assessment of the premises or the various learning activities that take place within them.
- This standard is no longer met.
- Some of the standards checked in this part are no longer met. These are listed in full in the annex to the report.

Part 6. Provision of information

All paragraphs

- The school's website and prospectus contain important information, including about the school's Steiner ethos and curriculum model. However, some information is missing, such as who the proprietors are, and how to contact them. Other information is out of date, such as the number of formal complaints registered in the previous year. As outlined in part 3, some key policies have also not been written and published.
- Leaders provide suitable annual reports to parents and carers.
- Some of the standards checked in this part are no longer met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33

- Leaders have not implemented their complaints policy effectively. They have not ensured that their chosen procedure has been followed when managing formal complaints. Where external support to handle complaints has been commissioned, this seems to have been inefficient: leaders have either disagreed with some of the

recommendations made, or decided not to implement them, or both. The final outcomes following the management of formal complaints, and any lessons learned, are entirely unclear from the school's records.

- A large amount of information concerning formal complaints is retained securely but it is not well organised. Leaders do not keep written records of formal complaints received, their stage of resolution, and any action taken as a result.
- Some of the requirements of the standard checked in this part are no longer met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leadership and management are in a state of flux. There is a serious lack of capacity.
- Poor communication is stifling progress. Documentation is disorganised and some policies are out of date because they have not been reviewed on time. There is a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, and the school's direction.
- A small number of devoted staff have too many responsibilities and not enough effective support and oversight. This means mistakes are made and key tasks are neglected.
- The new proprietors aim to breathe new life into this school, which was on the brink of closure three months ago. However, they are currently spending most of their time managing day-to-day incidents, and not enough time ensuring compliance with the independent school standards.
- As a result, this inspection identified unmet standards in every part checked, including this one.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's three-year accessibility plan ended in 2022. It has not been reviewed.
- This requirement is no longer 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. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	101073
DfE registration number	208/6344
Inspection number	10272192

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	Steiner
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	The Waldorf School of South West London Ltd
Chair	Sue Peat
Headteacher	Helen Kinsey
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,832 to £18,000
Telephone number	020 3417 3190
Website	www.londonsteinerschool.org
Email address	office@londonsteinerschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	9 to 11 November 2021

Information about this school

- London Steiner School provides Steiner-based education for boys and girls aged three to 14. The school is located in Balham, Lambeth.
- The Kindergarten provides early years education for children in the Nursery and Reception Years. Pupils in Year 1 are also taught in the Kindergarten. Pupils enter the lower school in Year 2 (class 1) and leave on completion of Year 9 (class 8).
- The school was due to close in October 2022. However, closure was avoided when two new directors (who are also trustees) joined the proprietor body. The chair of the

proprietor body remains unchanged for now. However, a handover process is underway. One of the new directors will soon become chair of the proprietor body.

- At the previous inspection, the school did not have a named headteacher. The school now does. However, the proprietors are currently seeking a new full-time headteacher.
- The school's membership of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship is currently suspended.
- The previous inspection was a standard inspection in November 2021. Since then, there has been a further reduction in the number of pupils from 47 to 25.
- The proprietors intend to introduce separate childcare provision within the same premises, before and after school hours. This is in the process of being planned. Leaders are in the process of applying for registration as a childcare provider with Ofsted.
- The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to information which raised concerns about some aspects of the school's work.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector was asked to report against some of the requirements contained within Parts 3, 6, 7 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding leader, and the two new members of the proprietor body. He spoke by telephone with the chair of the proprietor body. The inspector also spoke by telephone with the local authority's designated officer for safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed key documentation, including policies and documents related to safeguarding, formal complaints and health and safety.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils to talk about their views of the school.
- There were no recent responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, to consider as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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.
- 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 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)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate
 - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(2)(b) either–
 - 32(2)(b)(ii) where the proprietor is a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office.
- 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(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and–

- 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

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
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The requirement is met if the proprietor ensures a written accessibility plan is implemented.

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