

Centre Academy London

92 St John's Hill, Battersea, London SW11 1SH

Inspection date

20 September 2023

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)

- At the standard inspection in November 2022, the independent school standards (the standards) in this part were not met because the curriculum lacked breadth and ambition. The curriculum was not well sequenced, and the school had not considered what pupils needed to learn and when. At that time, there was no planned curriculum for the primary phase. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 were not experiencing all the required areas of learning.
- Leaders have made a range of changes since the previous inspection. They have redesigned the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 so that pupils now study a broad range of subjects. Leaders have worked out what pupils will be taught and in what order. They have established curriculum maps in all subjects. These are underpinned by schemes of work that intend for pupils to build their knowledge over time. Leaders have also broadened the curriculum offer for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This now includes history, geography, citizenship, and design and technology. Leaders have extended the range of qualifications and accreditations for older pupils. These now include GCSEs, BTEC National Diplomas and A levels.
- Leaders have introduced a phonics programme. When pupils join the school, staff check pupils' phonic and reading knowledge. Teachers provide phonics lessons and extra help with reading based on pupils' needs. The programme is suitable. Staff have received suitable training to deliver it effectively.
- Leaders have provided staff with training and support to understand the new curriculum. There are now clearer expectations for curriculum planning and lesson organisation. Teachers consider pupils' learning needs, aptitudes and abilities. Pupils' individual 'provision maps' are used to help teachers to understand what each pupil needs and how best to support them to learn the curriculum.

- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii)

- At the November 2022 inspection, the school's careers provision was poor. Pupils were not prepared enough for their next steps.
- Leaders have developed a careers programme. All pupils have timetabled lessons that include careers education. Leaders have commissioned an external company to provide an impartial careers guidance and advice service. Leaders have significantly increased the number of opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work. For example, they have established links with a variety of local businesses, charities and other organisations. This year, pupils in Year 10 and above have attended work placements.
- Leaders have developed partnerships with local colleges, including specialist settings. Leaders have set up opportunities for older pupils to visit these establishments. Throughout the school, pupils have heard from visiting speakers who have shared information about a range of jobs and future options.
- Work is under way to ensure that opportunities for careers education and preparation for adulthood are woven through other curriculum subjects.
- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.

Paragraph 4

- At the standard inspection in November 2022, the school's assessment procedures were weak. Pupils' starting points were unclear or unknown.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that leaders have looked carefully at how they check pupils' starting points. They have introduced a new assessment system to check pupils' English and mathematical knowledge. Teachers in each subject have considered how they work out what pupils already know and can do. Baseline assessments now include a wider range of information to get an all-round picture of pupils' strengths, abilities and needs.
- Leaders and subject staff have looked at how they check pupils' knowledge in other subjects. They have incorporated assessment checks and tasks in their curriculum plans.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this paragraph.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b)

- The standards in these paragraphs were not met at the November 2022 inspection because leaders had not provided new staff with timely induction training. Safeguarding records lacked rigour, including those related to safeguarding concerns and the actions taken. The school's safer recruitment process did not reflect statutory guidance. There was no consistent, agreed approach to de-escalation and safe physical intervention for staff working with pupils.

- Leaders, including governors, acted promptly to sort out these weaknesses. Leaders now ensure that all new staff are given comprehensive induction training at the start of their employment. This includes, among other things, safeguarding, health and safety, and the school's policies and procedures.
- A new online system is now in place for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that staff use the system appropriately. The new procedures allow leaders to access and analyse easily all information about pupils' pastoral needs. Leaders take swift action in response to any concerns raised.
- Leaders ensure that all the required pre-employment checks are completed. Record-keeping is organised.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have received training in safe physical intervention. Staff have received training on de-escalation strategies. The school's procedures, including for managing behaviour, have been updated to reflect this training.
- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.

Paragraphs 9, 10

- The school's policies and procedures for promoting positive behaviour and dealing with incidents are in place and well understood. These are implemented fairly and consistently. Leaders have updated policies to reflect some of the latest safeguarding information, including, for example, policies related to safe online behaviours and the staff code of conduct. The school's anti-bullying procedures are appropriate. The new online system is used to record all incidents, including any bullying. Leaders analyse this routinely. They provide information to governors and the proprietor each half term.
- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.

Paragraph 12

- At the previous inspection in November 2022, leaders had not ensured that all the required fire safety checks were completed on time, in line with the Regulatory Fire Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Documentation, including records of fire safety checks, was disorganised. Some fire safety checks had not been completed, and the external fire risk assessment had not been updated for two years.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that leaders have completed their proposed actions outlined in their action plan. A fire safety check has been completed, and any issues identified have been remedied. Records are now more organised. Leaders now have a clear understanding of what needs to be checked, and when and how often. They have set up a system to ensure that checks are undertaken and acted on appropriately.
- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.

Paragraph 15

- At the November 2022 inspection, leaders' recording of attendance information was disorganised. There were gaps in registers, and incorrect codes were being entered. This meant that attendance information was unreliable.

- This progress monitoring inspection found that leaders have taken suitable action to address these issues. Staff have been trained in the use of the online attendance system. Leaders check that the attendance records are correct, and that attendance codes are used accurately.
- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.

Paragraphs 14, 16–16(b)

- At the November 2022 inspection, leaders had not fully considered the risks presented to pupils on the premises or when using local leisure centre facilities. Leaders had not thoroughly assessed the use of therapy rooms and public spaces to identify and mitigate risks to pupils and staff.
- Leaders have taken suitable action to address these weaknesses. They have completed risk assessments for on- and off-site activities, including use of the leisure centre facilities and other educational visits. Where necessary, personalised risk assessments are in place for individual pupils.
- Leaders have installed CCTV cameras to all therapy and meeting rooms. Leaders have reviewed staff supervision levels throughout the day and on educational visits and outside events. These are now appropriate.
- The school has ensured that the requirements of the standards in these paragraphs are met.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(3), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a)(i)–21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b)

- These standards were not met at the previous inspection because pre-employment checks on adults had not been dated on the single central record since 2018. Some checks had not been completed at all.
- Leaders took swift action to sort this out. This progress monitoring inspection found that the single central record is compliant. Leaders complete and record all the required pre-employment checks accurately, including the dates on which checks were completed.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25, 28(1)(b)–28(1)(d)

- At the November 2022 inspection, various premises standards were not met. Hot water supplies were not regulated and presented a scalding risk. Drinking water supplies were not labelled. There were no medical room, changing room or shower facilities.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have addressed these weaknesses. Drinking water is now labelled. Hot water supplies have been adapted to regulate the temperature. A

new medical room has been built. It is suitably equipped and meets the requirements of the independent school standards.

- Pupils have use of a local leisure centre facility that provides them with exclusive use of changing room and shower facilities before and after physical education sessions.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(h), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(3), 32(3)(f)

- These standards were not met at the November 2022 inspection because leaders had not ensured that they were making all the required information available. This included policies, contact information for the sole proprietor and formal complaints information. Leaders were not sending annual statements of income and expenditure to placing authorities for pupils with education, health and care plans.
- Leaders now ensure that up-to-date policies are published on the school's website. Leaders have updated the website to include the contact details of the proprietor. The school's complaints policy has been updated to include the number of formal complaints the school received during the preceding academic year. The proprietor has discussed with placing authorities the arrangements for sending the required information related to income and expenditure. He has sent information as requested.
- The school's safeguarding policy is appropriate and available on the school's website.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- At the November 2022 inspection, leaders and the proprietor had not put systems in place to check the effectiveness of leaders' work. Many standards were not met.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor and leaders have made a number of changes to the school's work, including the arrangements for leadership and management. New staff have been appointed, and some leadership roles have been reallocated or distributed. Leaders have taken seriously the issues identified at the previous inspection.
- The governing body now consists of people from outside the company, including one governor with education expertise. The governance model has been strengthened. The proprietor and each of the governors have taken responsibility for particular independent school standards. Together, they monitor the school's compliance with these. The proprietor holds weekly meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the school business manager to discuss all aspects of the school's work, including compliance. The headteacher provides half-termly reports to governors and the proprietor that include updates on the quality of education.
- Leaders' original action plan, which was submitted to the Department for Education, was rejected because it was too vague and did not address all the issues identified at the previous inspection. Since then, leaders have updated the action plan. They have used

this to inform school development priorities and their self-evaluation tools. The action plan is now more detailed and is used by leaders and governors to check consistently the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

- Even though there is more work to do, particularly around the quality of education, leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that the independent school standards that were checked at this inspection are now met.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards in this part.

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. 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.

The school now meets 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)(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;
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 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(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; and
 - 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.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

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.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 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)(ii) the person’s medical fitness.
- 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)(i) S’s identity was checked;
 - 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)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
 - 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; and

- 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.
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 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)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water;
 - 28(1)(c) cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such; and
 - 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)(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; and
 - 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[16]) 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)(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 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.

School details

Unique reference number	101175
DfE registration number	212/6408
Inspection number	10295146

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	Day special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Rohan Murphy
Headteacher	Karen Lee-Douglas
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,800
Telephone number	0207 738 2344
Website	www.centreacademy.net
Email address	londonschool@centreacademy.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	22 to 24 November 2022

Information about this school

- Centre Academy London is an independent special day school. It caters for pupils with a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include specific learning difficulties, autism, and social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are placed at the school by a range of local authorities. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school has no separate sixth-form provision, although students continue to attend up to the age of 19. The school is registered to admit up to 60 pupils.
- The school's most recent inspection was a standard inspection in November 2022. At that time, its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.

- The school makes no use of alternative provision.
- The sole proprietor also owns Centre Academy East Anglia.
- The school no longer admits pupils in the primary age range. It has changed its registration to admit pupils aged 11 to 19. However, at the time of the inspection, the information on 'Get Information about Schools' records the registered age range as nine to 19.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools, the Department for Education (DfE). 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.
- At the request of the DfE, this inspection also checked the independent school standards related to behaviour and anti-bullying.
- The school's most recent inspection was a standard inspection in November 2022. At that time, its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate, and some of the independent school standards were not met. Following that inspection, the DfE required the school to prepare an action plan. The action plan was evaluated in April 2023. The DfE rejected the action plan.
- This inspection was the school's first progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and headteacher. He held meetings with staff and pupils. The inspector met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, checked the single central record and sampled safeguarding documentation. He discussed the curriculum with leaders and visited lessons. The inspector toured the school site, reviewed health and safety information (including risk assessments), and looked at the school's attendance registers.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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