

Focus 1st Academy

339 Bowes Road, New Southgate, London N11 1BA

Inspection dates

23 November and 11 December 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 3, 3(d), 3(g)

- The previous standard inspection in June 2023 found that staff were not adapting their teaching effectively in order to meet the pupils' needs. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), were not helped to build successfully on their prior knowledge in lessons. Teachers did not routinely check that pupils had understood what they were learning in class. As a result, pupils were developing misconceptions and/or had gaps in their learning, and teachers missed opportunities to correct these misconceptions or to fill the gaps.
- The school's action plan stated leaders' intention to write new schemes of work and assessments. The school's action plan also set out leaders' intention to provide staff with training to use pupils' prior attainment information to plan lessons and adapt their teaching.
- The school has newly developed curriculum documents for all taught subjects. These outline the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn through the year. There is now a clear programme of assessment in place. All pupils sit baseline assessments in English, mathematics and reading at the start of the year. Pupils new to the school complete these assessments upon enrolment. Staff use a range of methods to check what pupils know and can do at the start of new lesson sequences. They use this information to identify pupils' starting points and adapt teaching and resources. Staff check pupils' understanding regularly during lessons. They probe the pupils' recall and address any knowledge gaps.
- The school ensures that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified and that strategies to support them in the classroom are clear. Staff have received training so that they know the needs of pupils with SEND in their classes and use this to plan learning and support pupils.
- The standards in this part are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- The previous inspection judged these safeguarding standards to be met. This inspection found that this continues to be the case.
- The school has ensured that the school's safeguarding policy and chosen procedures reflect the latest statutory guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2023). Staff have received appropriate training and know how to report concerns about the safety of pupils. Leaders make appropriate referrals and work well with outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help they need.
- These standards continue to be met.

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

- The school has an appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policy. Leaders have ensured that staff know the expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is a clear record of sanctions kept by leaders. Pupils at the school know the school rules and the consequences of not meeting the school's expectations for behaviour.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraphs 11, 16, 16(a) 16(b)

- The school has appropriate policies relating to health and safety and risk management. Leaders ensure that these policies are put into practice effectively on site. They maintain an accurate record of behaviour and sanctions.
- These standards continue to be met.
- The standards in this part continue to be met

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) 34(1)(b)

- The previous inspection found that leaders did not ensure that all the independent school standards had been met. The school had not put effective systems in place to monitor how well teachers adapted learning to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school action plan was not acceptable. The actions proposed by leaders included insufficient detail.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to address the unmet standards from the previous inspection. They have provided relevant training for staff to improve the quality of education to meet the independent school standards consistently.
- The standards in this part are now 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. 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

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 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.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - (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.
- 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.
- 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 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; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	141247
DfE registration number	308/6003
Inspection number	10317783

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Marina Savva
Headteacher	Marina Savva
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,000 to £6,500
Telephone number	020 8361 5658
Website	www.focus1stacademy.org.uk
Email address	marina@focustraining.org.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	6 to 8 June 2023

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with a history of disrupted schooling. Typically, pupils are referred to this school by local authorities. Pupils may join the school at any point during the school year. A significant number of pupils have education, health and care plans. Pupils typically remain on roll at their home primary or secondary school while attending Focus 1st Academy.
- The school is currently operating from two sites: 339 Bowes Road, New Southgate, London N11 1BA and the Laura Trott Leisure Centre, 44 Windmill Lane, Cheshunt EN8 9AJ. The school is also registered to operate from St Paul's Church, High Road, New Southgate, London N11 1PL. There are currently no pupils located at the St Paul's Church site.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher is the sole proprietor of the school. There is no governing body.
- The school received a standard inspection in June 2023, when it was graded requires improvement. Following this inspection the school was required to submit an action plan. This action plan was evaluated by Ofsted in October 2023 and rejected by the DfE.

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 (ISS) and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspection was unannounced. Following the initial visit to the school on 23 November, the inspector returned on 11 December to consider the school's compliance with ISS requested by the registration authority.
- The inspector met with the deputy headteacher and designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector reviewed school documentation relevant to the independent school standards being considered. These included curriculum and assessment documents. They visited lessons, met with staff and spoke to a group of pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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