

First Bridge School

Unit 17, Block J1 Station Court, Imperial Wharf, 1 Townmead Road, London, SW6 2PY

Inspection dates

12 September 2024

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

All paragraphs

- Leaders have a carefully planned curriculum, with assessment policies and practices in place. These are designed to meet the range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of pupils, including those aged four. The plans suitably consider the needs of pupils who will have education, health and care (EHC) plans for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Leaders intend teaching to cover a range of subjects that meet the independent school standards and the requirements of the early years foundation stage framework. The additional four-year-olds expected to join this school are expected to typically have communication, social and behavioural difficulties. The school's planning and approaches are geared towards adapting planning and teaching to take account of pupils' bespoke needs.
- The school's plans for teaching personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) have been suitably adapted. The RSE policy is compliant with statutory guidance. Teaching of these programmes is likely to be appropriate for pupils aged four. There is a very strong focus on developing pupils' social skills and understanding of how to form positive and healthy relationships. The programmes also include age-appropriate coverage of fundamental British values, equality and a range of faiths and cultures.
- Leaders have ensured that they have a fully resourced classroom for the proposed additional pupils. Staff are well-trained and have the expertise needed to deliver the curriculum and meet pupils' needs. The proposed arrangements are likely to ensure that these Reception-aged pupils receive a strong quality of education.
- The independent school standards ('standards') checked in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved and implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

All paragraphs

- The PSHE and RSE curriculums are well thought through and adapted to be age and needs-appropriate for pupils, including four-year-olds. The programmes include the teaching of peoples' differences and encouraging respect for people with protected characteristics. The school teaches pupils about road and online safety. They plan to teach pupils an early understanding of the concept of consent, by helping them to communicate 'no' and to respond to a peer or adult that says 'stop'. Four-year old pupils will have access to the same assemblies, educational visits and enrichment activities as their older peers.
- Right from their induction, leaders make clear to staff that they may not promote partisan views and that balanced points of view must always be presented in the teaching of any political topic.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved and implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16–16(b) and 32 (1) (c).

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance at this school. Staff recruitment, induction and regular training procedures are robust. The school's safeguarding policy is up to date with the latest statutory guidance, including, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2024). The policy is published on the school's website.
- The school's health and safety and risk assessment policies are suitable. Leaders commission several external health and safety audits annually and implement any recommendations made. The school carries out a programme of routine checks of the premises and equipment. Leaders have also undertaken and written a raft of risk assessments, for example, relating to indoor activities and visits to the park.
- The proprietor body commission annual fire risk assessments. The school also commissions regular checks and servicing of fire-fighting equipment, emergency lighting and the fire alarms. Leaders carry out and record the required fire safety checks and evacuation practises. Three members of staff are trained fire wardens.
- Every pupil at the school has one-to-one adult support. Leaders intend for the proposed four-year-olds to have the same level of support. This means that throughout the day, every pupil is under adult supervision.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved and implemented.

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

All paragraphs

- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks is compliant and records all the required background checks for adults responsible for and working at the school.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved and implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

All Paragraphs

- There are four classrooms on the school's premises. Previously, two were used for the proprietor's registered early years provision and two for the school. The numbers attending the early years provision have significantly reduced and currently stand at 11. Leaders intend, therefore, to use three classrooms for the school to incorporate the four-year-olds and thus increase the school's registered capacity from 24 to 35. This plan is suitable if the material change is approved and implemented.
- The entire site is safe, clean, and very well maintained and resourced.
- Lighting, acoustics, and medical room facilities are all suitable. Labelled drinking-water supplies are available. The hot-water supply is safely regulated. There is an outdoor space for teaching physical education and for recreation.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved and implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

All paragraphs

- The proprietor body has given careful thought as to how it can extend the school's age-range and capacity to offer more pupils with autism the opportunity to be educated in this special school. Since opening their early years provision and then the school, they have consistently complied with all regulations and guidance and provided children and pupils with a strong education.
- The proprietor body bring a wealth of expertise and experience in special education and welfare. They have well established routines to frequently monitor and check that the school is consistently compliant with the independent school standards and other statutory requirements.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved and implemented.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	149762
DfE registration number	205/6005
Inspection number	10362558

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	First Bridge Group Limited
Chair	Aleksandra Zerkalova
Headteacher	Richard Leroy (executive headteacher) Mikaela Green (headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£85,000 to £95,000
Telephone number	020 3026 0095
Website	www.firstbridgecentre.com
Email address	admissions@firstbridgecentre.com
Date of previous standard inspection	16 to 18 April 2024

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 9	4 to 9	4 to 9
Number of pupils on the school roll	16	35	35

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	16	35
Number of part-time pupils	1	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	17	35
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	14	Up to 35
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	13	Up to 35

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	21	41
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	1
Number of staff in the welfare provision	5	5

Information about this school

- First Bridge School is an independent special day school in Hammersmith and Fulham. The school opened in September 2023 for pupils with autism and other SEND. Most pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The wider organisation provides early intervention for children with autism at their applied behaviour analysis clinic, First Bridge Centre, which is inspected separately by Ofsted as an early years provider
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned this inspection to consider the school's application to increase the number of pupils it admits from 24 to 35 and to change the age-range to include four-year-olds.
- This was the first inspection to consider the school's material change application.
- The inspection was announced with two days of notice.
- The inspector considered whether the relevant requirements in Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the independent school standards are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.
- The inspector met with a range of senior leaders. He spoke with the chair of the proprietor body. He toured the premises and met with a group of staff. He considered a range of evidence, including documents related to the curriculum, health and safety, risk assessment and fire safety. The inspection also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including pre-employment checks recorded on the school's single central record.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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