

New Level Academy

Wyke Gardens, London, W7 2BB

Inspection date

11 December 2024

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)

- These independent school standards (the standards) were not met at the previous inspection because the school's programme for relationships education was not implemented consistently. The curriculum for this area of learning did not take into account pupils' ages or prior understanding.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated, it was judged to be too vague. The plan did not indicate how often pupils would be taught personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. This was important given that the previous inspection found that pupils were not being taught relationships and sex education regularly. The plan stated that the school intended to review the PSHE schemes of work, implement baseline assessments and to work with external professionals to support curriculum development.
- This inspection found that the school has overhauled the curriculum for relationships education. It now aligns to the statutory legislation and covers all the required content for secondary-age pupils. The school has put in place baseline assessments to establish pupils' starting points. It uses assessment throughout the programme to ensure that the content of the curriculum matches to what individual pupils and cohorts need to know next. The work in pupils' books shows that the programme is implemented regularly. Pupils now have time each week dedicated to PSHE, including relationships and sex education (RSE).
- The previously unmet standards in this part are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- The arrangements for safeguarding were effective at the school's previous inspection.
- This inspection found that there continues to be a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils feel safe. They are well cared for by staff. Staff are clear about how and when to report concerns about pupils' well-being. Those responsible for safeguarding act

on concerns appropriately and work with other professionals, including social workers, to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. For example, the school's 'daily safeguarding question', which forms the basis of staff briefing meetings, helps to keep everyone up to date on local and national safeguarding information. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents and carers on the school's website.

- Some pupils are dual registered. This means that they spend some of their time here and the rest of their time at another school. The school's arrangements for sharing information are robust. For example, the school shares weekly reports on pupils' academic progress, as well as their attendance and well-being updates.
- The school's attendance monitoring procedures are robust. These include daily text-message communication between parents and the school. Systems are used to follow up absences, including home visits on the second day of a pupil's absence. The school liaises regularly with pupils' social workers and other professionals to ensure that any concerns about a pupil's absence are shared and that the appropriate action is taken. The school has procedures in place for identifying and reporting when pupils' absence becomes a cause for concern. Leaders understand what constitutes children missing in education and how to report this.
- This inspection found that some of the school's policies and procedures, particularly around managing allegations against staff or reporting low-level concerns about staff, are not as clear as they should be. For example, some policies refer to postholders that are no longer part of the school, while others include contradictory advice on how to report low-level concerns about staff. While these minor weaknesses do not mean that pupils are at immediate risk, this lack of coherence could cause confusion.

Paragraph 9, 9(c)

- At the previous inspection, the school did not maintain clear records relating to the use of sanctions. This was limiting the school's ability to identify and monitor any trends in pupils' behaviour.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated, it was judged that the school's proposed actions were suitable, with clear success criteria and completion dates. The action plan stated that the school intended to update and revise procedures to ensure that all sanctions are recorded appropriately.
- This inspection found that the school has implemented its intended actions. The school now keeps clear records of all incidents, including sanctions. Leaders use the school's online system to monitor and analyse incidents. The school ensures that incidents are recorded and followed up appropriately. Where fixed-term suspensions have been used, the school has ensured that the correct procedures have been followed, including re-integration meetings and the involvement of parents and other professionals.
- The previously unmet requirements are now met.

Paragraph 15

- At the previous inspection, the school did not maintain clear records relating to attendance. This limited leaders' capacity to analyse information to identify patterns or trends in pupils' absence.

- When the school's action plan was evaluated, it was judged to include clear and precise actions with suitable success criteria. The plan stated that the school intended to revise its attendance procedures and to introduce new strategies such as introducing weekly checks on the school's attendance information.
- This inspection found that the school uses an online system to record pupils' attendance. The school follows up absences diligently. Routine communication between staff, parents and other professionals helps to continually improve pupils' rates of attendance. However, the school uses attendance and absence codes incorrectly. This means that the school does not pay due regard to the most recent statutory guidance. This standard remains unmet.
- Some of the previously unmet standards in this part remain unmet.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34, 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection because the proprietor had not ensured that all of the standards were met. There were weaknesses in the recording of sanctions and pupils' attendance. The school's RSE programme was not implemented consistently. It did not build well enough on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. The inspection also found that leaders lacked knowledge of some of the statutory requirements.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated, it was judged that the proposed actions were too vague. Although the plan stated that leaders intended for trustees to do termly reviews and for the headteacher to have one-to-one training, it was not clear what these actions would entail. For example, it was unclear what the training would focus on and what the support from another trust would include.
- This inspection found that the school has worked effectively to improve curriculum thinking for PSHE, including RSE. It has also improved the recording and monitoring of incidents, including sanctions. The headteacher is receiving support from an experienced headteacher from a specialist trust. This work is being used to strengthen leaders' understanding of the statutory requirements and to improve school development planning.
- This inspection found that the positive culture of safeguarding seen at the previous inspection continues. However, this inspection identified some shortcomings in the school's policies and procedures related to managing allegations and low-level concerns about staff. The school's various policies and procedures which refer to these important aspects do not align well with each other. This could cause confusion in how to report, record and manage such allegations.
- This inspection also found that the school does not ensure that attendance registers are maintained appropriately. Absence and attendance codes are not used correctly or in line with the statutory guidance.
- Although the proprietor has addressed some of the previously unmet standards, there remain some weaknesses in the school's attendance arrangements. The school intends to continue to use the support and expertise from another trust to further strengthen leaders' understanding of the standards and their oversight of aspects of the school's work.

- This standard remains unmet.

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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	142832
DfE registration number	307/6003
Inspection number	10370264

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	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	4
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	London Rangers Football Charity
Chair	Mr T Springer
Headteacher	Mrs S Dacoury-Tabley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,550
Telephone number	020 8838 3529
Website	www.newlevel.brent.sch.uk
Email address	info@newlevel.org.uk
Dates of previous standard inspection	23 to 25 April 2024

Information about this school

- New Level Academy is an independent school and alternative provision. It is registered to cater for up to 50 pupils aged 11 to 19. Pupils typically have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils are placed by their schools and are admitted on a dual registration arrangement.

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- All pupils study core subjects in English, mathematics and science and complete functional skills qualifications in these subjects. Some pupils also study GCSE courses. Students in the sixth form study courses leading to level 1 and 2 qualifications.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place in April 2024.
- The school operates from: Evershed Sports Ground, Wyke Gardens, London W7 2BB

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 and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The school's most recent inspection was a standard inspection in April 2024. Following the inspection, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare an action plan. The action plan was reviewed in October 2024. The DfE rejected the school's action plan.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body, the headteacher and other members of staff. Inspectors met with pupils and had a tour of the premises. They reviewed policies and other documentation related to the curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. An inspector reviewed the single central record of staff suitability checks.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Guy Forbat

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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[13].

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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the 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
 - 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.

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-
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

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