

Focus 1st Academy

339 Bowes Road, New Southgate, London N11 1BA

Inspection date

10 January 2023

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- At the time of the material change inspection in June 2022, leaders had not ensured that the school's safeguarding policy and procedures were rigorous enough. Leaders were not acting with enough due regard to the latest statutory guidance. Leaders had not ensured that staff received regular safeguarding training. Leaders' arrangements for documenting safeguarding concerns, referrals and actions taken were weak.
- Leaders submitted a post-inspection action plan which included details of the additional training that leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and other staff would undertake. The plan showed that leaders had introduced a new online system to log safeguarding concerns and updated the safeguarding policy which had been published on the school's website.
- This monitoring inspection found that leaders have ensured that an appropriate safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The policy has been updated to meet the requirements of the latest statutory guidance in the current edition of 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- Leaders have undertaken additional training to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge to manage the safeguarding of children in the school. They have introduced an online system for reporting concerns and ensured that staff are trained and use this. Staff have had regular safeguarding training in line with the latest guidance.
- Leaders have developed a strong link with the local authority safeguarding network and ensure that they are following the latest safeguarding guidance. They work effectively with outside agencies to support pupils who are at risk and ensure that all pupils receive the help they need.
- The requirements of this paragraph are now met.

Paragraph 16, 16 (a) 16(b)

- At the time of the material change inspection, the school's risk assessment policy for the established premises at 339 Bowes Road, New Southgate, London, N11 1BA continued to be suitable. However, leaders had not prepared a risk assessment for the proposed

additional premises at Laura Trott Leisure Centre, 44 Windmill Lane, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, EN8 9AJ.

- The post-inspection action plan stated that the final version of the risk assessment would be updated ready for the school premises opening. The detail of the risk assessment was not provided.
- This monitoring inspection found that leaders have now completed an appropriate risk assessment for the additional premises. The risk assessment includes thorough consideration of the use of some areas in the additional premises that will be shared with the general public. Leaders have completed separate risk assessments for all activities that take place within any of the public areas of the premises. Leaders have considered ways to minimise the risk to pupils.
- The school now meets the previously unmet requirements for this part.

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

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(e), 18(3)

- At the time of the material change inspection, leaders had not ensured that the procedures for the safe recruitment of new members of staff were rigorous. Although the required checks on staff had been carried out, leaders' knowledge of the latest requirements for carrying out checks on new members of staff was weak. The process for additional overseas checks was not fully understood by leaders.
- In the post-inspection action plan, leaders stated that they had amended the template used for recording pre-employment checks on staff. However, the action plan did not provide assurance that leaders fully understood the process of additional overseas checks.
- Leaders have now undertaken additional training to ensure they understand fully the checks that they are required to carry out when recruiting new members of staff. They have increased the number of leaders with responsibility for checking and managing the record of pre-employment checks. The information recorded on the record of pre-employment checks is now more detailed than was previously the case and includes the appropriate overseas checks. Leaders demonstrate appropriate knowledge about the pre-employment checks needed to ensure that they manage the safe recruitment of adults.
- The school now meets the previously unmet requirements for this paragraph.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)

- The material change inspection found that the proposed additional premises were not made ready for use by the school. The space set aside for the creation of a medical room had no washing facility and was therefore not suitable.
- In the post-inspection action plan, leaders stated that planned building work and furniture fitting would be completed by October 2022. The action plan did not detail the specific action that leaders would take to ensure that the medical facility would be suitable.
- Leaders have completed the building work at the proposed additional premises. They have created a reception area and two classrooms within the space available and have

begun to install furniture and teaching resources. The medical room has been fitted with a sink with hot and cold taps and a treatment bed. Leaders intend to use this space as an office which can be vacated when it is needed for medical treatment.

- The school now meets the previously unmet requirements for this paragraph.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- The material change inspection identified weaknesses in safeguarding practice at the school. Leaders did not demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of statutory guidance, including the independent school standards. The proposed new premises were not made ready to host pupils, including lacking the necessary medical facilities. Leaders had not ensured that appropriate risk assessments had been created for the new premises.
- In the post-inspection action plan, leaders detailed the additional training that leaders would undertake. The training aimed to ensure that leaders had the appropriate knowledge and understanding to meet the independent school standards consistently and manage the welfare and safety of pupils.
- Leaders have sought advice from the local authority and education consultants to develop their knowledge and understanding of the latest statutory guidance regarding safeguarding. Leaders have joined the local authority safeguarding network to ensure they have access to regular training and are kept up to date.
- Leaders have increased the number of members of staff who have the highest level of safeguarding training. They have introduced improved systems for safeguarding management and for staff recruitment. They work with the local authority to ensure that safeguarding procedures receive regular external scrutiny.
- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that previously unmet standards 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 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.

- 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)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- 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.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 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;
 - 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).

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 standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	141247
DfE registration number	308/6003
Inspection number	10262461

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	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Marina Savva
Headteacher	Marina Savva
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,500
Telephone number	020 8361 5658
Website	www.focus1stacademy.org.uk
Email address	marina@focustraining.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	12 to 14 March 2019

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with a history of disrupted schooling who are referred to them by local authorities. Pupils may join the school at any point during the school year. Some pupils have education, health and care plans. Pupils typically remain on roll at their home secondary school while attending the school.
- The school is currently operating from two sites: 339 Bowes Road, New Southgate, London, N11 1BA and St Paul's Church, High Road, New Southgate, London, N11 1PL.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher is the sole proprietor of the school. There is no governing body.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in March 2019. It received a material change inspection on 8 June 2022 to consider the school's application to increase its

capacity to 89 pupils. The inspection considered the school's proposal to use additional premises within Laura Trott Leisure Centre, 44 Windmill Lane, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, EN8 9AJ.

- On 25 January 2022, inspectors considered the school's material change application to increase its capacity to 49 pupils. The inspection also considered the school's proposal to open a second site at St Paul's Church, High Road, New Southgate, London, N11 1PL. The Department for Education (DfE) has since approved this material change application.
- The school received an additional inspection on 11 July 2019 to consider the school's material change application to extend the age range of pupils from 14 to 16 years to 5 to 16 years. The DfE has not approved the school's application to extend its age range.

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 now meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the scheduled to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Following the school's additional inspection in June 2022, leaders were asked to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan on 14 October 2022 and the DfE rejected the school's action plan. The DfE requested that this first progress monitoring inspection consider whether particular independent school standards contained within parts 3,4 5 and 8 are now met.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the sole proprietor. They also met with other senior leaders and teaching staff.
- The inspector visited the additional premises accompanied by school leaders and the leisure centre's manager. The inspector reviewed risk assessment documents related to the proposed premises.
- The inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and reviewed policies relating to safeguarding. The inspector checked the school's record of pre-employment checks and discussed the procedure for recruiting new staff with school leaders. The inspector also reviewed documents of safeguarding training for staff. The inspector considered what pupils had been taught about staying safe, including online.

Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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