

Focus 1st Academy

339 Bowes Road, New Southgate, London N11 1BA

Inspection date

8 June 2022

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7

- The school's safeguarding policy is unhelpfully located within a document of multiple policies. It includes only very basic information for staff and parents. It does not pay regard to the latest statutory guidance, such as the advice about sexual violence and sexual harassment between children. Leaders responsible for safeguarding had no knowledge of this guidance. They do not ensure that staff are trained regularly enough. The arrangements for documenting safeguarding concerns, referrals and actions taken are weak.
- The recruitment process is not strong enough. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of when to check staff who have recently lived or worked overseas. Not enough care is taken to check that application forms and professional references are completed fully. The interview process is not documented at all. Disclosure and Barring Service certificates are being wrongly retained on staff files. Staff are being asked to complete 'disqualification by association' checks, contrary to guidance.

Paragraphs 11 and 12

- The school's health and safety policy continues to be suitable. It is likely to be implemented well at the proposed additional premises.
- All the required fire safety checks are being carried out at the proposed additional premises. Fire safety certificates, logs and an external fire risk assessment were all available for inspection; they demonstrate compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Paragraph 14

- As the school grows, leaders' staffing proposal is to provide at least one adult for every five pupils. This is likely to provide a suitable level of supervision.

Paragraph 16

- The school's risk-assessment policy continues to be suitable. However, leaders have not prepared a risk assessment of the proposed additional premises.
- The school is not likely to continue to meet the requirements of the independent school standards in this part if the material change is approved. The independent school standards not likely to be met are listed in the annex to this report.

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

All paragraphs

- The single central record (SCR) of employment checks on staff is compliant overall. All the required checks are recorded for the proprietor, leaders and staff.
- Some minor changes were made during the inspection to improve clarity, including ensuring that all checks are accurately dated.
- However, although a column for additional overseas checks is included on the SCR, this check is not fully understood by leaders; it has been confused with the 'right to work' check. Despite this misunderstanding, all the required checks have been carried out.
- The school is not likely to continue to meet this part of the independent school standards if the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

All paragraphs

- The school's proposed additional premises are within a public leisure centre. They consist of a large room with suitable adjoining toilet and washing facilities, and an appropriate space which will be used to create a medical room facility.
- The proposed premises are currently occupied by a Nursery. The space to create a medical room facility currently has no washing facility and is being used as a storeroom.
- Drinking water is labelled and available within the proposed premises. Hot water supplies are safely regulated. Arrangements for lighting, acoustics, cleaning and maintenance are all likely to be compliant with the requirements.
- The school's use of the proposed premises would include access to a range of indoor and outdoor spaces for play and sports, as well as suitable shower and changing facilities.
- When vacated and works are complete, the proposed premises could feasibly accommodate a maximum of 20 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the proposed premises are not ready for use by the school.
- The school is not likely to continue to meet this part of the independent school standards if the material change is approved.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school remains compliant with this requirement because a safeguarding policy is published online.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor has ambitious plans to develop this school into a three-site provision for pupils aged five to 16. However, the proposed additional premises at Laura Trott Leisure Centre, Waltham Cross are not ready. The inspection has identified weaknesses, especially in safeguarding practice. Leaders do not demonstrate sufficiently strong knowledge and understanding of statutory guidance, including the independent school standards.
- The school is not likely to continue to meet this part of the independent school standards if the material change is approved.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely 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, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

Unique reference number	141247
DfE registration number	308/6003
Inspection number	10243583

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	Day special school and alternative provision
School status	Other independent school
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

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	14 to 16	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	26 (capacity 49)	Up to 89	No change at this time

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	No change
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	26	89
Number of part-time pupils	0	No change
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	26	Up to 89
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	5	Up to 20
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	5	Up to 20

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	No change
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	5

Information about this school

- Focus 1st Academy caters for pupils with a history of disrupted schooling. This includes those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have education, health and care plans. Several local authorities and schools refer and place pupils. Almost all pupils remain on roll at their secondary school.
- The headteacher is the sole proprietor of the school. There are no arrangements for governance.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

- The school's most recent inspection took place on 25 January 2022. It was an additional inspection to consider the school's material change application to increase its capacity to 49 pupils. The inspection considered the proposed additional use of a church hall including a committee room at St Paul's Church, High Road, New Southgate, London N11 1PL. The Department for Education (DfE) has since approved the application and the school's maximum capacity is now 49 pupils. The school is currently only operating at its main premises but intends to also operate from St Paul's Church from September 2022.
- Another previous inspection took place on 11 July 2019. It was also an additional inspection 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 inspection judged the independent school standards as likely to be met if the age range was extended. However, the intended additional premises that would have accommodated younger pupils were not available for inspection at the time. Since then, additional premises have been secured (those visited at the January 2022 inspection). However, the school's application to extend its age range has not yet been approved by the DfE.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place in March 2019.

Information about this inspection

- The school has applied to the DfE to make another material change to its registration. The material change is an increase in capacity from 49 to 89 pupils, using an additional premises within the Laura Trott Leisure Centre, Windmill Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN8 9AJ. At the DfE's request, this was the school's first inspection to check whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if they decide to approve the change.
- The inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspector met with the sole proprietor, who is also the headteacher. He also met with the designated safeguarding lead and two pupils at the school's main premises. The inspector toured the proposed additional premises accompanied by school leaders and the leisure centre's managers.
- The inspector reviewed documentation relevant to the independent school standards being considered. These included policies and logs relating to safeguarding, recruitment, health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet 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
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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