

Flexible Learning Centre

204 Slade Road, Birmingham, B23 7RJ

Inspection dates

1 July 2014

Context of the inspection

- The school's last full inspection was in December 2013. It was judged to be inadequate overall because leadership and management were inadequate and the school failed to meet a number of the Independent School Standards for the curriculum and for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Some standards relating to premises and accommodation were also unmet.
- The school submitted an action plan to the DfE in February 2014, which was evaluated in March of that year. The plan was judged to require improvement as it relied on stating intended action, rather than planning a series of actions to methodically address the unmet regulations.
- This progress monitoring inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE to evaluate the progress made by the school in the implementation of its action plan.
- This was the first visit made to the school to check progress.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Regulations not met

The school has amended its action plan to show a clearer sequence of actions to be taken to address unmet regulations. Some actions have been completed successfully. The school is currently negotiating the purchase of two new sites, which may enable appropriate action to meet the remaining regulations.

Ensure that there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and that it is implemented effectively.

The inspection of December 2013 found that, although a broad and balanced curriculum was planned and available, it was not adequately implemented with regard to physical education.

The school has appointed a teacher to lead on the delivery of physical education from September. Plans are in place for this subject to be taught more regularly to full time students. Draft schemes of learning include practical physical education sessions. The school has negotiated a contract with the local authority to use facilities at a local leisure centre and an athletics ground for physical education lessons. This regulation is likely to be met by September.

Ensure that there is a written policy which complies with relevant health and safety laws and that it is being implemented.

At the time of the previous inspection, risk assessments in the school's four sites were variable. For one site they were adequate, but risks were not identified adequately at the other three sites. Some successful actions have been taken. Nevertheless, this regulation remains unmet because some risk assessments are out of date and there are no records to show whether identified issues have been followed up.

At the Slade Road site, some electrical sockets appear unsafe and a number of fluorescent lights have no diffusers. The batteries in some smoke alarms at this site and at Pye Hayes are worn out and have not been replaced. Safety tests on electrical equipment at both the Pye Hayes and Weoley Castle sites have not been carried out with the required frequency. While a risk assessment for the shared use of the Weoley Castle site has been carried out, this has not been done for the Pye Hayes site.

Ensure that there is compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The school did not meet this regulation at the previous inspection because a fire door at one site was chained locked on the inside and another was jammed so that it would not open. There was no signage to show emergency evacuation procedures and some fire escape routes were blocked by locked gates. The school was reliant on the other user of one site to maintain checks on fire safety equipment and procedures, but had not questioned whether these were completed.

Emergency evacuation procedures are now signalled clearly and routes to assembly points are accessible. No fire doors were locked during this inspection. However, one remained blocked by a raised paving block and could not be opened by inspectors. Fire risk assessments for Pye Hayes, Weoley Castle and Slade Road are out of date. No fire drills have been recorded since January 2013 at the Weoley Castle site. The school still relies on the building's other user to maintain fire safety equipment. However, there are no records to indicate that maintenance checks for fire safety have been carried out at this site, either by the school or by the owners of the site (Birmingham City Council). This regulation, therefore, remains unmet.

Ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.

No staff toilets were available at the Weoley Castle site at the time of the last inspection. Therefore toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils were not available. The school has now provided a separate staff toilet so that this regulation is met.

Ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (PE).

Showers have been installed at the Hockley site, but there is no changing accommodation or showers at the school's other sites, so that the regulation is not yet met. The revised

action plan shows a proposal to relocate to new premises or to remodel existing premises by October 2014 so as to meet this regulation. In addition, the contract for provision of PE at local authority facilities includes the use of changing and showering facilities.

Ensure that accommodation is provided for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

There is no designated medical room at the Pye Hayes site and the designated room at Weoley Castle does not have washing facilities. Therefore this regulation is not met.

Ensure that the school's accommodation and facilities are maintained to a sufficient standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils, as far as is reasonably practical.

At the previous inspection, poor maintenance of fire safety equipment at the Weoley Castle site did not ensure the safety of students or staff. This remains the case. In addition, some electrical sockets appear unsafe and there are no diffusers on fluorescent lights at the Slade Road site. Therefore this regulation is not met.

Ensure that cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such.

The school has made suitable arrangements to ensure that students can access drinking water at the Pye Hayes site. Clearly signed water coolers have been installed at Slade Road and the Hockley site. All other water supplies are identified as not suitable for drinking. This regulation is now met.

Ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

The hot water at the Slade Road site is not regulated as 'hot' taps run cold water. This regulation therefore remains unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements

Ensure that there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and that it is implemented effectively.

Part 1
paragraph
2(1)

Ensure that there is a written policy which complies with relevant health and safety laws and that it is being implemented.

Part 3
paragraph 11

Ensure that there is compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.	Part 3 paragraph 13
Ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.	Part 5 paragraph 23A(1)(c)
Ensure that accommodation is provided for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.	Part 5 paragraph 23B(1)(b)
Ensure that the school's accommodation and facilities are maintained to a sufficient standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils, as far as is reasonably practical.	Part 5 paragraph 23C
Ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.	Part 5 paragraph 23F(1)(d)

Inspection team

Sandra Hayes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mel Ford

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Flexible Learning Centre is an independent day school that is located on four sites in different parts of Birmingham: Pype Hayes, Erdington, Hockley and Weoley Castle. The headteacher is the proprietor and owner of the school.
- The school, which opened in September 2008, provides an alternative education for students aged from 14 to 16 years.
- Forty five students are currently enrolled. About two thirds of students attend full time and the rest on a part-time basis. Most students are referred by school partnerships or networks acting through their referring agencies. Some students remain on the roll of local secondary schools and are dually registered.
- Nearly all of the students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties that have resulted in them not doing as well as they could at school. Currently, five of the students are looked after by the local authority. None of the students on roll has a statement of special educational needs. The students represent a wide range of different cultures and beliefs.
- The school does not use alternative provision to extend its curriculum.
- The school's main aim is to help students to overcome any disadvantages and disaffection in order to achieve their full potential.

School details

Unique reference number	135561
Inspection number	444880
DfE registration number	330/6128
This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Secondary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part time pupils	16
Proprietor	Shamim Akhtar
Headteacher	Shamim Akhtar
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,800 (full time)
Telephone number	0121 2403718
Email address	info@flexiblelearning.org.uk

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