

Flexible Learning Centre

204 Slade Road, Birmingham, B23 7RJ

Inspection dates

23 April 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring inspection visit was made at the request of the registration authority to check on the progress made by the school in implementing its action plan and to evaluate the progress made by the school in meeting the failed Independent School Standards. Visits were made to the school's four sites in Erdington, Hockley and Weoley Castle.
- This is the second visit made to the school to check progress.
- 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.
- The first progress monitoring inspection was carried out in July 2014. The school failed to meet a number of independent school standards at this inspection.
- The school no longer uses the accommodation in Pype Hayes. A material change inspection was carried out during this progress monitoring inspection to advise the registration authority on the suitability of the school's new premises at The Magnet Centre, Park Approach, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 7SJ. The recommendation to the registration authority for this material change application is reported separately.

Main findings

Quality of education provided

- The inspection in December 2013 found that only a limited number of students had opportunities to participate in physical education. As a result, the school's curriculum plans were not fully implemented.
- The first progress monitoring inspection in July 2014 found that plans were in place for physical education to be taught more regularly to full time students from September 2014. The school had negotiated a contract with the local authority for the use of facilities at a local leisure centre.
- This inspection found that students now have regular opportunities to participate in physical

education lessons at a local leisure centre. These lessons include a range of indoor games and activities. A minority of students have additional opportunities to follow physical education and sport examination courses. The standard is now met.

Welfare, health and safety of students

- The inspection in December 2013 found that assessments of risks to the health and safety of students and staff across the school's four sites were inconsistent and that significant risks, particularly fire risks, had not been identified or remedied.
- The progress monitoring inspection in July 2014 found that risk assessments for the school's Pye Hayes and Slade Road sites were out of date and that issues had not been identified and remedied. Inspectors also found that there were some unsafe electrical sockets at the Slade Road site and that smoke alarm batteries needed replacing at the Slade Road and Pye Hayes sites. In addition, classroom lighting was unsuitable at the Slade Road site and electrical equipment testing was out of date at Pye Hayes and Weoley Castle. Significant fire hazards were identified at the school's Weoley Castle site.
- The school no longer uses the Pye Hayes site and has moved to a new location at The Magnet Centre, Park Approach, Erdington, Birmingham.
- This inspection found that the school's health and safety policy is suitably implemented. Buildings, activity and fire risk assessments are up to date and identify potential risks. The school has taken appropriate action to reduce or remove risks at all four sites. Electrical sockets, fire alarms and lighting are regularly maintained, safe and suitable. Portable electrical equipment at all four sites is regularly tested in line with requirements. As a result, this standard is met.
- The inspection in December 2013 found that students' welfare, health and safety were not promoted as they were not protected against the risks of fire.
- The inspection in July 2014 found that fire risk assessments for the Pye Hayes, Weoley Castle and Slade Road sites were out of date and that assembly points were not marked. There was no evidence that fire evacuation drills had been carried out since January 2013. In addition, inspectors found that at the Weoley Castle site a fire door was blocked by a raised paving slab and there were no records of maintenance checks for fire safety equipment.
- This inspection found that at all four sites: fire risk assessments are regularly updated and the school takes appropriate action to reduce or remove potential risks; assembly points are marked; fire evacuation drills are carried out and recorded; fire escapes are signed, identified and clear of obstructions and maintenance checks are carried out on fire fighting equipment. This standard is now met.

Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The inspection in December 2013 identified that there were no showers or changing facilities available on any of the school sites.
- The inspection in July 2014 found that showers had been installed at the Hockley site but not in the other three sites. The school had negotiated a contract with the local authority for the use of facilities at a local leisure centre.
- This inspection found that the school uses off-site provision for physical education activities. These facilities have been checked by school leaders and include changing and showering

facilities. The Magnet Centre has suitable changing accommodation, showers and outdoor space if the school chooses to change the current arrangements for physical education at this site. As a result, this standard is met.

- The inspection in December 2013 found that there was no designated medical room at the Pye Hayes site.
- The inspection in July 2014 found that a medical room was provided at the Pye Hayes site. However, this and the Weoley Castle site medical room did not have a sink.
- This inspection found that all the school's four sites now have suitable accommodation to cater for the medical examination and treatment of students and for the short-term care of sick and injured students which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility. This standard is now met.
- The progress monitoring inspection in July 2014 found that the maintenance of fire safety equipment at the Weoley Castle site was inadequate, including a fire door being blocked by a raised paving slab. In addition, at the Slade Road site some electrical sockets were unsafe and the lighting was unsuitable in classrooms.
- This inspection found that at all four sites the premises and the accommodation and facilities are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of students are ensured. Fire escapes are signed, identified and clear of obstructions. Maintenance checks are carried out on fire fighting equipment. This standard is met.
- The inspection in July 2014 found that taps at the Slade Road site were not regulated as the hot taps ran cold.
- This inspection found that the temperature of hot water at the point of use is suitable and does not pose a scalding risk to users. As a result, this standard is met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements.

Inspection team

Peter Humphries, Lead inspector

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: 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. The school is registered for 150 students.
- There are currently 107 students on roll. 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 emotional and social difficulties that have resulted in them not doing as well as they could at school. A minority of students are new arrivals to the country or have been unable to secure a mainstream school place. Currently, two of the students are looked after by the local authority. One of the students on roll has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. Approximately two thirds of students are eligible for the pupil premium grant which is additional government funding aimed at improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. 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	463859
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 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

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	107
Number of part time pupils	41
Proprietor	Shamim Akhtar
Chair	Shamim Akhtar
Headteacher	Shamim Akhtar
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,800
Telephone number	0121 240 3718
Email address	info@flexiblelearning.org.uk

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