

# Southbank International School, Westminster

63-65 Portland Place, London W1B 1QR

## Inspection dates

1–2 May 2014

## Reason for inspection

This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to report on the school's compliance with all the standards for independent schools referenced in: Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, and Part 4, Suitability of proprietors and staff and supply staff. In particular, inspectors were asked to consider the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

## Conclusions

The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are not sufficiently robust. In particular, the designated safeguarding leads do not demonstrate that they have sufficient status and authority in the school to influence its safeguarding policy and practice. The school has not done enough to ensure that some key risks have been assessed or monitored with sufficient rigour to safeguard pupils.

The school has two members of staff with designated responsibility for child protection. One of the designated leads is also a counsellor in the school and the other, recently appointed, has middle management responsibility. Both designated teachers have received appropriate training. However, they do not demonstrate that they have sufficient status and authority in the school to influence its safeguarding policy and practice. They are not aware of the content of the statutory guidance, *Keeping children safe in education*, issued on 3 April 2014 from the Department for Education. Despite this being relatively new statutory guidance, the designated teachers were not aware of its existence, what it entailed for their role and what implications it might have for the training or guidance of staff in the short or longer term. They are not involved sufficiently closely with either the senior leadership team or the proprietor in updating and reviewing the school's child protection policy. None of the senior leadership team showed any awareness of the content of new statutory guidance. As a result, they have not evaluated what aspects of the new guidance they might have to implement in the short term or what implications it may have for some of their recruitment practice.

Accident logs show a number of incidents over time on the main stairs in the Portland Place site, including trips and falls. The relevant risk assessment is of poor quality and does not pay due attention to the actual or potential risks. Supervision is not formalised despite a 'control measure' to minimise or reduce risk indicating that 'supervision is organised'.

There is no risk assessment for the journey that students frequently take as pedestrians between the Portland Place and the nearby Conway Street sites (a distance of about 0.4 miles). The school's written policy on education trips and visits, adopted in January 2013

and published on the school's website, makes reference to 'unofficial visits'. This aspect of the policy is open to misinterpretation by staff, parents or pupils, for example in relation to professional boundaries. This is at odds with the statement in the safeguarding policy, referring to staff contact with pupils: 'do not arrange to meet them outside of school hours'.

The attendance register records the presence and absence of pupils using the codes recommended by the Department for Education. However, it does not use the recommended code for exclusion. On the few occasions where pupils have been excluded, the school has used the code for unauthorised absence rather than exclusion ('E').

## 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**

Make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.	Paragraph 7
Ensure that the designated safeguarding leads have the appropriate authority to provide advice and support to other staff.	Paragraph 7
Make sure that there is sufficient rigour in the implementation of key health and safety risk assessments.	Paragraph 11
Ensure that pupils are properly supervised through appropriate deployment of school staff.	Paragraph 15
Keep attendance registers which record the presence or absence of pupils using the recommended codes.	Paragraph 17

## Inspection team

John Kennedy, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Beckford-Hall

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Information about this school

- Southbank International School was founded in London in 1979 as the American International School. The school is owned by Cognita Schools Ltd.
- The Southbank International School, Westminster campus opened in Portland Place in 2003, with additional premises for Grades 11 and 12 (Years 11 and 12) in nearby Conway Street coming into use in 2007. The school also has primary campuses in Kensington and Hampstead.
- Southbank International Westminster offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme and the IB Diploma Programme.
- Students are from a very wide range of nationalities with the majority being children of parents who are in London on business or diplomatic assignments.
- An Executive Principal has oversight of all three schools within the group.
- The Southbank International Westminster School was last inspected by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in May 2013. Since that inspection, new Principals have been appointed to the Kensington and Westminster campuses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100542
<b>Inspection number</b>	446476
<b>DfE registration number</b>	207/6383
<p>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.</p>	
<b>Type of school</b>	Independent school
<b>School status</b>	Independent secondary school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	344
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Schools Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Sir Christopher Woodhead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Lacey (Executive Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April–2 May 2013
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	(Grades 6-10) UK £23,130 (Grades 11-12) UK £25,230
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7436 9699
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7436 9699
<b>Email address</b>	admin@southbank.org

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