

Vishnitz Girls School

196 Lordship Road, London, N16 5ES

Inspection dates

23 February 2016

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- The Department for Education commissioned this inspection following safeguarding concerns raised about the school. The emergency inspection was unannounced.
- The inspector reported against some of the regulations contained in Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils; Part 5, Premises of and accommodation at schools; and Part 8, Leadership and management of the independent school standards. As a result of the inspection, further unmet standards were identified in Part 4, Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher for the early years provision and the headteacher for the primary phase. A number of documents were examined. These included: policies and procedures concerning safeguarding, including a scrutiny of the single central record of staff checks; health and safety documentation, including risk assessments; and the admission and attendance registers. The inspector conducted a tour of each site: the early years foundation stage at 196 Lordship Road; the key stage 1 accommodation at 85 Lordship Road; the key stage 2 site at Fairholt Road; and the proposed new site for all primary pupils at 49 Amhurst Park.

Main findings

- The school's child protection policy has not been reviewed since 2010. As a result, procedures do not have regard to the Department for Education guidance, as outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education', July 2015 (KCSIE). Both headteachers, who are also the designated safeguarding leads, are aware of this guidance as they have recently attended child protection training. However, they are not appropriately trained, as neither has undertaken 'Prevent' training. Staff have not received safeguarding training as outlined in Part 1 of KCSIE and therefore are not prepared well enough to respond to the range of safeguarding concerns which may arise. This potentially puts pupils at risk of harm.
- While both sets of primary accommodation are fit for purpose, the early years setting is in a poor state of repair and is untidy. Boxes and equipment are left on the floor in corridors and cables are left unsecured. This poses potential health and safety risks.
- Supervision on all three sites has been stepped up, with security guards having responsibility for vetting visitors. However, systems for deploying staff are insufficiently robust. Practice is not consistently effective at each of the sites.
- The admission register is compliant. Although the attendance registers are filled in correctly in the primary phase, those in the early years are not. Staff do not use the recommended codes. This could pose a serious safeguarding concern.
- Not all the required checks are made to secure the safety of pupils. School leaders were not aware of the need to undertake prohibition checks on staff. Equally, although leaders knew about checks regarding disqualification by association, they have not undertaken these to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. As a result, the single central record does not include all the required checks. Furthermore, some of the safeguarding and welfare requirements in Section 3 of the early years statutory framework are not met.

- The key stage 1 site does not have a suitable medical room to accommodate sick or injured pupils. Accommodation for children who feel unwell in the early years is situated in the school office, which is cramped. It does not allow for privacy, as it is not for the sole use of children. This is inadequate.
- The general level of maintenance at the early years site is poor. Paint is peeling from the walls and the flooring is uneven. This is compounded by a lack of space and general untidiness.
- Parents are not able to request an up-to-date child protection policy because leaders have not ensured that the policy and procedures reflect the latest statutory requirements.
- The proprietor has failed to make sure that all the independent school standards are met. Their lack of scrutiny of the work of the school has not ensured that the safeguarding and welfare of pupils is promoted. The regulations concerning the quality of leadership and management are not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- Ensure that the school's actions for the safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children pay due regard to the latest guidance from the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of the written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- Ensure that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14).
- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- Ensure that checks in relation to prohibition orders are carried out and recorded (paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b)).
- Ensure that a register is kept which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) and (7) as applicable to the school in question (paragraph 21(1) and 21(3)(b)).
- Ensure that accommodation is provided for the medical examination of pupils (paragraph 24, 24(1)(a)).
- 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 (paragraph 24, 24(1)(b)).
- Ensure that the school premises and accommodation and facilities are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonable practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- Ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities, so the independent school standards are met in full (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).
- Ensure that leaders and managers actively promote the well-being of pupils, paying due regard to the latest guidance from the Secretary of State (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

■ Section 3 of the early years statutory framework – safeguarding and welfare requirements:

- The school should ensure that there is a system in place to manage any potential disqualification of staff (3.14–3.18):
 - 3.14. A registered provider or a childcare worker may be disqualified from registration¹⁵. In the event of the disqualification of a registered provider, the provider must not continue as an early years provider – nor be directly concerned in the management of such provision. Where a person is disqualified, the provider must not employ that person in connection with early years provision. Where an employer becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee, the provider must take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children.
 - 3.15. A registered provider or a childcare worker may also be disqualified because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed.
 - 3.16. A provider must notify Ofsted or the agency with which the childminder is registered of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the premises where childcare is provided. The disqualification of an employee could be an instance of a significant event. If a registered person or childcare worker is disqualified they may, in some circumstances, be able to obtain a 'waiver' from Ofsted.
 - 3.17. The provider must give Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered, the following information about themselves or about any person who lives in the same household as the registered provider or who is employed in the household:
 - details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006;
 - the date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose;
 - the body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed; and
 - a certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction).

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Vishnitz Girls School is a school for Orthodox Jewish girls aged between three and 10 years. All pupils are from the Orthodox Jewish community in the London Borough of Hackney in North London.
- There are currently 190 pupils on roll, which breaches the school's registration. Two pupils have an education, health and care plan. There are 73 children who attend full time in the early years provision.
- The school was registered in 2009 as an early years setting and then registered as a primary school in 2012.
- The school's first full inspection was in July 2013, when all the independent school standards were judged to be met. The school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- At that time the school was located in two three-storey houses, in 196 Lordship Road and 85 Fairholt Road. The school was registered to educate 80 pupils. At this time, the school applied to extend the age range to eight years of age and to increase the maximum number of pupils to 127.
- In September 2015, the school indicated to the Department for Education that it wished to extend the age range to Year 8 and to increase the maximum number of pupils to 300.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was located in three buildings. The additional site at 85 Lordship Road now accommodates Year 1 and 2 pupils.
- The school intends to move all primary-aged pupils to a new site in March 2016, which is currently being renovated. The premises are spacious, with a total of nine classrooms. It is intended that the early years provision will remain at 196 Lordship Road, until the proprietor finds a new site.
- The aims and ethos of the school are governed by the codes of the Torah and are based on the three tenets of Judaism, 'Torah, Prayer and acts of loving kindness'.

School details

Unique reference number	138516
Inspection number	10010386
DfE registration number	204/6006

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	Orthodox Jewish day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–10 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Steiner
Chair	Rabbi Schneebalg
Headteachers	Mrs Weiss, Mrs Fogel, Mrs Grohman
Date of previous school inspection	July 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,200
Telephone number	020 8800 4994
Email address	head@vishnitzgirlsschool.co.uk

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