

Rutherford School

1a, Melville Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 7HZ

Inspection dates

6 November 2013

Reason for inspection

This unannounced emergency inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Department for Education, following concerns raised by a parent and/or carer. Her Majesty's Inspector was asked to establish the effectiveness of the school's record keeping and policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. This included consideration of the independent school regulations for pupils' welfare, health and safety and the quality of the leadership and management of these areas.

Conclusions

Her Majesty's Inspector toured the school during lessons, therapy sessions and at lunchtime to observe the staff at work with the pupils. Two teaching sessions were formally observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, business manager, the Garwood Foundation Director of Services, senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants and members of the specialist clinical team. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's single central register, staff files, pupil incident and accident records and policies for safeguarding, health and safety and first aid.

This inspection showed that, while pupils are well cared for on a day-to-day basis, a number of independent school regulations are not being met. In particular, failings were found in relation to regulations relating to welfare, health and safety, the systems for the appointment of staff and the complaints procedure.

Procedures for the recruitment of staff and checks on their suitability to work with children do not meet requirements. Although criminal record checks have been undertaken for all staff not all the required checks are completed ahead of the member of staff commencing work. Specifically, references are not always checked and checks on the person's suitability to work with children (ISA barred list check) are not always completed. The single central register does not provide a complete and consistent record of the required checks for the school staff, staff not directly employed by the school and members of the proprietorial body.

Overall, the school's policies and procedures provide staff with appropriate guidance for the day-to-day care and safeguarding of the school's very vulnerable and highly dependent pupils. A safeguarding policy is in place and provides a suitable framework for the protection of children. However, there are several shortcomings in the policy which means it does not meet requirements, for example in relation to demonstrating an awareness of the changes to procedures for dealing with allegations against staff or in naming the current designated child protection officer. Nonetheless, training for child protection is up to date for staff and for the current designated child protection officers. Leadership of child protection is strong with accurate identification of concerns, tenacious follow up procedures and good partnership work with local agencies and families. Policies for fire safety, first aid and health and safety are in place. Excellent attention is given to pupils' welfare, health and

safety throughout the day. All pupils require medical care throughout the day. Teaching staff work in close partnership with the specialist medical and therapy team which includes physiotherapists and registered nurses. Pupils are extremely well supervised and supported in all activities, including for hydro and rebound therapy. All intimate care is undertaken by two staff working together. Detailed risk assessments for each individual child are in place for all school activities, both on and off site. These are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they match the current needs of each child.

A wide range of policies are in place to support pupils' high medical needs, including for the movement and the intimate care of pupils. Records of all treatments, drug administration and observations of pupils are rigorously kept. However, the first aid policy does not meet the most recent requirements. This is because it does not reflect or link sufficiently well to the school's medical and care policies and procedures, such as when to call an ambulance or the policy on dealing with pupils should they have a seizure. Nonetheless, all accidents and incidents are carefully recorded and are followed up by senior staff and analysed for patterns or any cause for concern. Sufficient staff have current first aid qualifications, with many staff trained in resuscitation. All procedures are regularly reviewed and adjustments made to improve the quality of care for the pupils. Parents and carers are kept informed of observations, concerns and treatments through frequent telephone calls and the home-school books.

The premises and equipment are routinely checked, with staff aware of the need to report any concerns about the premises. Fire safety requirements are met. Policies for managing behaviour and anti-bullying are written with careful regard to the specific needs of pupils. The admissions and attendance registers are in order.

All staff treat the pupils with dignity and respect. They show high levels of care for pupils and a high commitment to securing the maximum gains in pupils' personal, social and physical development possible. Teachers and teaching assistants work together exceptionally well to deliver each pupil's personalised curriculum. Team work with the medical and therapy staff ensure that every minute of the day is used to support all aspects of pupils' learning and well-being, to foster independence and the pupils' ability to make choices. In a group music session, the teacher and her team of four assistants worked together to provide a highly stimulating sensory journey based on transport. In another session, a pupil enjoyed an age-appropriate story read to him by the class teacher. She skilfully worked to develop his communication skills and assessed his recall using visual symbols. However, at times, some pupils could be challenged more and greater links made between their individual targets and the statements of special educational needs and the National Curriculum P levels. There were no responses on Parent View, but the one parent/carer spoken to was very positive saying that her child is well cared for and is thriving at the school.

The complaints policy lacks clarity in places, for example in relation to the keeping of complaints records, and does not include the reference that a person independent of the school should be part of a panel formally hearing a complaint.

The headteacher is providing vision and strategic direction to the school. He has established new posts of responsibility and ensured clarity in job descriptions. He is challenging practice at all levels, underpinned by a programme of staff development to secure improvement. However, the overall leadership of welfare, health and safety could be

more rigorous. The headteacher recognised that policies were not being routinely reviewed and improved and is addressing this issue with a full programme of reviews in place for the current term. However, some policies, notably for safeguarding, have yet to be reviewed to ensure they meet current guidance. The Garwood Foundation trustees and the governing body have not acted with sufficient rigour in checking systems and procedures and in ensuring that all the regulations for independent schools are met. The headteacher, with the Director of Services, is working to improve the effectiveness of the governing body, but governors have been slow to react to this leadership and are yet to fulfil their role in holding the school to account. There is currently no Chair of the Governing Body in post.

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 arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school have full regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.	Paragraph 7
Ensure the written policy on first aid fully meets requirements and reflects the school's practices and procedures.	Paragraph 14
Ensure that for appointments from 1 May 2007 only, in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.	Paragraph 19(2)(d)
Ensure all the required checks are completed before a person's appointment.	Paragraph 19(3)
Ensure that the chairperson makes all the required checks on other members of the proprietorial body.	Paragraph 21(6)(b)
Ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the register shows that all the required checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained.	Paragraph 22(3)
Ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or before 1 May 2007, the register shows that all the required checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained.	Paragraph 22(4)
Ensure that in relation to staff not directly employed by the school, the register shows whether written notification has been received from the employment business that it has carried out the checks referred to in 20(2)(a) together with the date the written notification that each check was made or certificate obtained, was received.	Paragraph 22(5)
Ensure that in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the register shows whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.	Paragraph 22(6)
Ensure that in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed at any time before 1 May 2007, the register shows	Paragraph 22(7)

whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

Ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school. Paragraph 25(g)

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Rutherford School is an independent special day school for pupils aged from three to 19 years with profound and multiple learning difficulties, complex medical needs, degenerative conditions and additional sensory impairments.
- The school is part of the Garwood Foundation and opened in 1950. It is situated in a residential area of South Croydon and occupies a building that was originally a large family home which has been significantly extended to include specialist facilities. No use is made of any off-site provision, but there is an on-site Saturday Club which is also offered to pupils not on the school roll.
- The school is registered for 29 pupils aged between three and 19 years. Currently, there are 25 pupils on roll aged from six to 16 years, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs and no verbal communication skills. The majority of pupils come from the London Borough of Croydon and a minority from neighbouring boroughs.
- The school adopts an intra-disciplinary approach and aims to enhance every learner's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development, thereby enabling them to develop their potential and live life to the full.
- The school was last inspected in January 2012 when all aspects, including pupils' welfare, health and safety, were judged as outstanding and all regulations for independent schools were met.

School details

Unique reference number	101843
Inspection number	433036
DfE registration number	306/6078
<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>	
Type of school	Special day school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Garwood Foundation
Chair	Dudley Mead
Headteacher	Noel Gibb
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,146
Telephone number	020 8688 7560
Email address	rutherford@garwoodfoundation.org.uk

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