

Rutherford School

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

Inspection dates

12 March 2014

Context of the inspection

The inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. The school was previously inspected on 6 November 2013, as part of an unannounced inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE), following concerns raised by a parent or carer. The inspection found that the school failed to comply with 11 regulatory requirements. Two of these related to the school's systems to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Eight of the failed regulations concerned the school's systems to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors. The other concerned the school's systems to manage complaints. An action plan was prepared by the school to address these issues. The plan was reviewed and accepted by the DfE on 13 January 2014. This was the first visit to the school to follow up its progress in making the necessary improvements to meet regulatory requirements. The visit was made without notice.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Good progress

The inspection found that the school has made good progress since the previous inspection and now meets all regulatory requirements. There have been no further complaints made to Ofsted about the school since the previous inspection.

During this visit, Her Majesty's Inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the Garwood Foundation Director of Services, senior staff, a teacher and a teaching assistant. A number of documents and policies were scrutinised, including the school's single central register of staff's suitability checks, and policies for safeguarding children, health and safety, first aid, and for dealing with complaints. Her Majesty's Inspector also toured the school, and visited each learning area, to observe the school at work.

The inspection of November 2013 found that there were shortcomings in the school's safeguarding policy. This was because the policy failed to name the school's designated child protection officer, and did not outline suitable procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. The policy has now been reviewed and these shortcomings have been effectively addressed. Discussions with staff indicate that they have a good understanding of the school's procedures and systems to keep children safe. They also understand the procedures they should follow, in line with the latest government guidance, in the case of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school's first aid policy did not meet requirements. This was because it did not link sufficiently well to the school's medical and care policies and procedures. The school's first aid policy, and other care policies and procedures, including when to call an ambulance and how to deal with pupils should they

have a seizure, have now been reviewed and revised. The policies now meet requirements, link together sufficiently well, and are well understood by relevant staff in the school.

At the time of the previous inspection, procedures for the recruitment of staff, and checks on the suitability of staff and members of the proprietorial body to work with children, did not meet requirements. This included insufficient background checks on staff who had lived or worked abroad, and also on staff who work at the school but are not directly employed by the school. The school has now reviewed its recruitment procedures and has devised a suitable recruitment checklist, to ensure that any newly recruited members of staff undergo all of the necessary checks prior to commencing their employment. Appropriate additional checks have been carried out on staff currently working in the school, including staff not directly employed by the school, and on members of the proprietorial body. All staff have now been checked for their suitability to work with children, and the proprietors have undertaken risk assessments on all staff who have lived overseas in the past. Appropriate additional background checks, including an additional reference, have been completed on the headteacher since the previous inspection, as it was identified by the proprietorial body that he has worked overseas in the past. Leaders have ensured that all checks, including checks on members of the proprietorial board, have been accurately recorded on the school's single central register of staff's suitability checks.

The inspection of November 2013 found that the school's complaints policy did not meet requirements. This was because it failed to include suitable arrangements for a person independent of the management and running of the school to be part of a formal complaints committee. Leaders have now reviewed and revised the school's complaints policy to include reference to an independent representative. A suitable person, from a neighbouring school, has been identified. The complaints policy now meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Rutherford School is an independent special day school registered for 29 pupils aged from three to 19 years with profound and multiple learning difficulties, complex medical needs, degenerative conditions and sensory impairments.
- Currently, there are 24 pupils on roll, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs and limited verbal communication skills. The majority of pupils come from the London Borough of Croydon and a minority from neighbouring boroughs.
- The school is part of the Garwood Foundation and opened in 1950. It is situated in a building that was originally a large family home that has been significantly extended to include specialist facilities. No use is made of any off-site provision. There is an on-site Saturday Club which is also offered to pupils not on the school roll.
- The school adopts an interdisciplinary 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.

School details

Unique reference number	101843
Inspection number	443363
DfE registration number	306/6078
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	Special day school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–19
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	6 November 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,146
Telephone number	020 8688 7560
Email address	Rutherford@garwoodfoundation.org.uk

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