



Progress Monitoring with Material Change Inspection Report

The Children's House School

September 2023

School's details

School	The Children's House School			
DfE number	206/6383			
Registered charity number	1113285			
Address	The Children's House Upper School King Henry's Walk Islington London N1 4PB			
Telephone number	02072 496273			
Email address	administrator@childrenshouseschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Ms Ellie Grunewald			
Chair of governors	Mrs Dawn Brindle			
Proprietor	The Children's House School			
Age range	2 to 9			
Number of pupils on roll	105			
	EYFS	50	Upper School	55
Date of inspection	26 September 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 The Children’s House school is a co-educational day school located in Islington, north London. The school is overseen by a board of governors. It occupies two sites near to each other; an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) nursery in Elmore Street for children from the age of two and a half to four, and an upper school in King Henry’s Walk, for pupils from Reception to Year 4. The school has five pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils. The school’s previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in January 2023.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection in January 2023. The inspection focused on the school’s compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.
- 1.3 Additionally, this inspection served as a material change inspection to assess the school’s proposal to extend its age range incrementally from two to seven to two to eleven. This material change inspection considered extending provision for pupils to the age of nine. It focused on the upper school site.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2A (relationships education)	Met
Part 1, paragraphs 3 (teaching) and 4 (framework for pupil performance)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding); EYFS 3.4, 3.7, 3.9, 3.11 and 3.14	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); EYFS 3.25	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); EYFS 3.9 and 3.65	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 and 20 (suitability of staff and proprietors); EYFS 3.7, 3.9 and 3.11	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management)	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum and relationships education [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2A]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The school offers a suitably broad curriculum. It has planned and is implementing suitable schemes of work for pupils up to and including Year 4. This includes a curriculum which meets the requirements of the EYFS in Nursery and Reception. The curriculum covers the core areas of English, mathematics and science, as well as a range of subjects including Spanish, dance and swimming. Pupils undertake a suitable programme of work in personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes topics which prepare them for the next steps in their education. The school enriches pupils' learning through visits to places of interest linked to topics being studied and after school clubs covering a range of interests.
- 2.3 The school makes appropriate provision for relationships education, which is taught weekly to all pupils as part of the school's PSHE programme. The scheme of work has due regard to relevant statutory guidance and themes are reinforced in circle times and assemblies. This promotes respect for others effectively, particularly those with protected characteristics. Older pupils assert their understanding of respect accurately as being kind and helpful to all. The school publishes its relationships education policy on its website. It has consulted with parents, and continues to communicate with them, particularly in relation to the teaching of more sensitive topics.

Quality of education provided – teaching and framework for pupils' performance [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 3 and 4]

- 2.4 The school meets the standards.
- 2.5 Teaching across the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop their skills in a wide range of subjects. Lessons incorporate effective teaching strategies and are based on teachers' secure professional knowledge about how to promote good progress. This enables them to support pupils' individual needs effectively. The school provides suitable support for pupils with SEND, through targeted activities which address their areas of difficulty effectively. The leadership has considered appropriately what good learning behaviours look like in older pupils and these are modelled effectively by staff. Teachers use their good relationships with pupils to manage classroom behaviour positively and effectively. Pupils, including those in Years 3 and 4, have access to sufficient suitable resources to support their learning.
- 2.6 The school has a suitable framework in place to regularly evaluate pupils' progress by means of standardised testing and internal assessment. Teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' aptitudes and learning needs, gained from suitable formative and standardised assessments.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.7 The school meets the standard.
- 2.8 The implementation of the school's ethos and aims promotes positive character traits and values in pupils in line with British values. Pupils learn about social, moral and cultural issues through religious education and PSHE, as well as in assemblies and circle time. The school also holds themed events to widen pupils' perspective on the world, such as through focusing on families' cultural and geographical backgrounds and environmental themes such as recycling. Pupils regularly take part in fundraising

events, including ideas suggested by the school council. They are involved effectively in the local community through singing at a local care home and maintaining a plot in the community garden. Leaders demonstrate an appropriate awareness of the importance of developing the self-knowledge, confidence and sense of responsibility of older pupils in the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7; EYFS 3.4, 3.7, 3.9, 3.11 and 3.14]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.9 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.10 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.11 The school meets the standard and the requirements.
- 2.12 All aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures are effectively implemented, including those relating to safer recruitment. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of procedures for listening to children and then refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Concerns are recorded in sufficient detail, together with actions taken. Staff understand effectively their own code of conduct and procedures for whistleblowing or sharing a low-level concern. Staff are trained in safeguarding at an appropriate level for their responsibilities. The DSL and deputies receive training from the local safeguarding partnership which informs their knowledge about multi-agency working. The DSL ensures that all staff are aware of statutory guidance through regular training and updates and seeks advice from external agencies when necessary.
- 2.13 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 confirmed their confidence that they can talk to a member of staff about any concerns, including if they are worried about a friend. As well as being able to talk to an adult, there is effective provision for pupils through worry boxes and PSHE sessions where staff emphasise that pupils can talk to any adult at any time. Staff interviewed consider there to be a transparent school culture where pastoral care is given high priority. Inspection evidence confirmed this view. Welfare concerns are shared at weekly staff meetings so that all are aware of any difficulties a pupil is encountering.
- 2.14 The school teaches pupils how to keep safe online, at an age-appropriate level, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 are aware of procedures to follow, primarily telling an adult, should anything untoward occur. School technology is effectively filtered and monitored and advice is available to parents on this aspect of online safety.
- 2.15 Governors undertake suitable safeguarding training, often with staff, to inform their oversight of safeguarding arrangements. They carry out an effective annual review of safeguarding and are involved with the annual safeguarding audit prepared for the local authority. They have ensured that since the previous inspection they now maintain sufficiently rigorous and informed oversight of those recruitment checks related to statutory safeguarding guidance. These include obtaining suitable references and verifying them; checking for any gaps in employment history; and requiring staff to declare whether there is any reason they are disqualified from childcare where relevant. When a person is allowed to start work in regulatory activity before a DBS certificate has been seen, it makes an adequate assessment of risk which is suitably documented, including a written rationale for any supervision arrangements.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; EYFS 3.25]

- 2.16 The school does not meet the standard and the requirement.
- 2.17 The school has a suitable first aid policy which is effectively implemented in almost all respects. Arrangements detailed in the policy ensure that first aid is administered efficiently. Pupils confirm that they are well cared for when they feel ill or hurt themselves. All accidents are recorded appropriately and communicated to parents and carers. Any more serious accident is promptly reported under RIDDOR.
- 2.18 Whilst many staff on both sites are suitably trained in first aid, only one member of staff holds a current full paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate. Most staff have undertaken an Early Years first aid course which equates to a paediatric first aid half-course. This arrangement does not ensure that there is always one full-course-trained paediatric first aider on each site and available when EYFS children are present, or to accompany EYFS children on outings. This is a statutory requirement for the EYFS.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; EYFS 3.9 and 3.65]

- 2.19 The school meets the standard and the requirements.
- 2.20 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy which is implemented through a range of risk assessments which identify potential risks together with mitigating actions. In response to its action plan, the school now implements an appropriate procedure to manage risk should a member of staff's disclosure and barring certificate (DBS) not yet have arrived.

Suitability of staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 and 20; EYFS 3.7, 3.9 and 3.11]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards and the requirements.
- 2.22 The school's governors and leadership have, in response to the previous inspection, rigorously checked and amended recruitment practices to ensure that now all standards are securely met. This has been demonstrated in all the correct checks being made in a timely manner for appointments of staff and governors made since the previous inspection. These include checks against the list of those barred from working with children; checks of medical fitness for staff and checks of the right to work in the United Kingdom for staff and governors; and checks of governors against the list of those prohibited from management and evidence that a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service check has been made. Governors now exercise sufficiently robust oversight of recruitment, for example, the designated safeguarding governor regularly checks the single central register and staff files effectively.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.23 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.24 The school does not meet the standard.

- 2.25 Governors and school leaders have taken effective action to remedy the shortcomings found at the previous inspection by rectifying procedures related to recruitment checks. Governors now exercise their responsibilities for oversight of safeguarding and safer recruitment effectively.
- 2.26 The proposed extension, year on year, of the school's age range from seven to eleven years has been planned with sufficient care so that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are well established in their education and personal wellbeing and a natural part of the school community.
- 2.27 Whilst in almost all respects, leadership and management now demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils, insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that sufficient numbers of staff working with EYFS children on each site have full paediatric first aid training. This has not been identified by governors. As a result, this EYFS requirement and its associated independent school standards are not met.

3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 13

- The school must ensure that sufficient staff in the EYFS on each site have a full paediatric first aid qualification [paragraph 13; EYFS 3.25].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34

- The school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and that they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

4. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Summary of findings

- 4.1 The school has prepared appropriately for an extended upper age range from seven to nine years, as part of a gradual extension to eleven. The proposed higher age range does not impact on its current registered capacity. Older pupils are receiving suitable provision in terms of their education, personal development and welfare. Teachers working with older pupils are suitably skilled and experienced for this age group.
- 4.2 The non-compliance relates solely to the EYFS and therefore has no impact on older pupils, since there are sufficient trained first-aiders in the upper school. However, this issue indicates insufficient knowledge and oversight by governors and senior leaders.

Recommendation

- 4.3 The request for a material change to extend the age range from seven to nine cannot be approved until all the standards and requirements are met.

5. Summary of evidence

- 5.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. They visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.