

Snowflake School

46a Longridge Road, London SW5 9SJ

Inspection date

19 August 2020

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b) and 32(1)(c)

- From November 2020 onwards, leaders propose to increase the school's capacity from 18 to up to 42 pupils. Leaders, including the proprietor, have considered carefully the safeguarding implications associated with this change. This includes the recruitment and training of new staff, as well as the suitability and organisation of the additional premises.
- Appropriate policies and records are in place for all aspects of health and safety, including fire safety and the assessment of risk. Leaders' checks on the suitability of the site are thorough and comprehensive. To support leaders' oversight of the premises, the proprietor draws effectively on advice from external consultants. Leaders intend to replicate this approach at the additional building. They have sought and acted on appropriate advice regarding fire safety regulations at the new site. For example, an additional evacuation route has been created on the first floor to aid the safe evacuation of staff and pupils in an emergency.
- The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. In devising health and safety procedures, leaders ensure that pupils' complex needs are fully planned for. There are suitable measures in place to minimise risks and promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Off-site activities are well planned. Supervision arrangements, both on and off site, take account of pupils' needs, as well as the location and type of activity. Leaders review all health and safety procedures, including risk assessments, on a regular basis. They act promptly to address any potential issues they identify.
- The safeguarding policy complies with the most recent government guidance. It is available to parents and carers on the school's website. All staff receive safeguarding training on induction, as well as regular 'refresher' training during their employment. The training programme is comprehensive, covering issues such as mental health, extremism and child criminal exploitation. Staff also receive clear guidance on how to report and record any concerns they may have about pupils' safety. Records indicate

that staff are vigilant and give pupils' welfare the utmost priority. Leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding receive additional training appropriate to their role.

- Leaders and staff are well trained in understanding and catering for pupils' individual needs. This includes training and guidance on the safe use of de-escalation strategies and physical restraint. Each pupil has a personalised risk assessment. This means that staff know which strategies to use to promote pupils' safety and well-being. Any incidents of physical restraint are recorded and evaluated thoroughly, in accordance with the school's policy.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the relevant requirements in this part if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All paragraphs

- Leaders involved in staff recruitment undertake appropriate training. They understand and follow statutory guidance regarding the safer recruitment of staff. This includes obtaining suitable references, verifying a candidate's right to work and following up on any gaps in employment history.
- The single central record of pre-employment checks contains all the necessary information, including records of the required checks on trustees. Leaders also make sure that all the required vetting checks are carried out on any supply staff.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the requirements in Part 4 if the material change is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

All paragraphs

- In readiness for an increase in the school's capacity, the proprietor has acquired an additional site at Crown Street, W3. It is intended that the Crown Street building will be used to educate up to 24 secondary-aged pupils. Primary-aged pupils will continue to be educated at the existing premises at Longridge Road, SW5.
- The Crown Street site is currently being refurbished, according to the relevant building, health and safety and fire safety regulations. Credible plans are in place to ensure that the works will be completed and signed off by the relevant authorities by mid-October. Leaders have also drawn up credible plans to ensure that the well-being of current secondary-aged pupils is maintained during the move to the new location.
- Once complete, the building and facilities at Crown Street are likely to be secure and suitable for secondary-aged pupils. As well as five classrooms, the building has a large hall for dining, sports and assemblies. There is also a dedicated space for the teaching of food technology and independent living skills. A small outside area is available for sports activities and for pupils to socialise. In addition, leaders plan to use a nearby park for the teaching of physical education. All of these facilities are likely to be ready for use by 2 November 2020. The existing building and facilities at Longridge Road are likely to remain suitable for primary-aged pupils. The size and number of rooms across

both sites are likely to be able to comfortably accommodate the proposed increase in capacity.

- The additional building is being refurbished to a high standard, with clear consideration of pupils' needs. For instance, dimmable lighting has been installed and the dining hall will be fitted with additional acoustics to regulate noise. Classrooms will be organised and equipped based on pupils' specific learning needs. Plans for the building include appropriate measures to improve access for disabled pupils and adults. Suitable toilets, a shower room and washing facilities will be available. There will also be a suitable medical room located next to pupils' toilet facilities.
- The school is likely to continue to meet the regulations in Part 5 if the material change is approved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

All paragraphs

- Leaders, including the proprietor, have planned meticulously for the proposed expansion of the school. This includes the acquisition and refurbishment of additional premises.
- In order to maintain the quality of pupils' education, leaders intend to increase the number of pupils on roll gradually, reaching a maximum capacity of 42 pupils within three years. Leaders' plans are rooted firmly in their commitment to providing every pupil with a safe and inspiring place to learn. Leaders have made good use of expertise available from external professionals to help them realise their ambitious vision for the school. This includes working closely with architects and building contractors to ensure that the additional site is likely to be suitable and ready for use by November 2020.
- All aspects of pupils' safety and well-being have been considered in the refurbishment and organisation of the additional premises. New staff have already been appointed and will be trained thoroughly. Leaders have suitable plans in place to appoint further staff as the school grows. An appropriate leadership structure is in place to support the smooth running of two separate sites. The leadership structure includes clearly defined responsibilities and lines of accountability.
- Leaders and trustees demonstrate a thorough understanding of the regulations for independent schools. Trustees' oversight of the school's work, including health and safety, is strong.
- The school was judged to be outstanding at its previous standard inspection. Leaders have detailed plans in place to maintain the quality of the school's provision as the school expands.
- The standards in Part 8 are likely to be met if the material change is granted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	135616
DfE registration number	207/6408
Inspection number	10154829

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Independent day school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Snowflake School for Children with Autism Limited
Chair	Faryaneh Akhavan
Headteacher	Kerry Sternstein
Annual fees (day pupils)	£56,892
Telephone number	020 7370 3232
Website	www.snowflakeschool.org
Email address	office@snowflakeschool.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	12–14 February 2019

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	5 to 16	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	18	42	42

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Not applicable

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	18	42
Number of part-time pupils	0	Not applicable
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	18	42
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	17	42
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	17	42

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	24	55
Number of part-time teaching staff	1	3
Number of staff in the welfare provision	1	6

Information about this school

- Snowflake School is an independent special school that caters for up to 18 pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are placed from a range of local authorities.
- The school currently operates from one site, located in Earls Court in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. There are currently 18 pupils on roll. In readiness for the proposed increase in pupil numbers, the proprietor has acquired an additional site at 10-14 Crown Street, Acton, W3 8SB. This site is located within Ealing local authority.

- The school's last full inspection took place in February 2019. Its overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2019.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic of 2020. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely. This was due to restrictions placed on non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The DfE commissioned this material change inspection in response to the school's request to increase the number of pupils on roll from 18 to 42. It is anticipated that all pupils admitted will have additional needs related to a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. To accommodate the proposed increase in numbers, the school plans to open an additional site. The commission requested that Ofsted consider all the relevant regulations in Parts 4, 5 and 8, and selected requirements in Part 3 of the independent school standards. This was the school's first material change inspection.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the school premises to determine whether they are likely to be suitable for the number of pupils the school proposes to accommodate. This included a tour of the recently acquired additional premises. The inspector reviewed the school's website as well as relevant policies and documentation related to health and safety and safeguarding. Discussions were also held with the headteacher and the chair of trustees.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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