

Applied Educational Solutions

10 Central Parade, Green Street, Enfield EN3 7HG

| Inspection dates | 3–5 February 2016 |
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| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governance arrangements are not in place. As a result, the school's headteacher, who is also the proprietor, is not supported well enough.
- Although staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, the headteacher is absent for a significant proportion of time and this impacts on the leadership of the school.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are not reliable enough. The school does not make accurate checks on pupils' skills and abilities when they enter the school across all subjects. Pupils make progress, but leaders do not know precisely how much progress they have made from their starting points.
- The school's evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses is too generous.
- Pupils' personal development, particularly their social, emotional and behavioural progress, is reported anecdotally but is not always assessed, monitored or evaluated.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because teaching is sometimes not interesting and engaging enough and time is wasted.
- Teaching does not sufficiently challenge the most-able pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has created a school with an open culture of respect and tolerance. Pupils are safe from harm and well supported, which helps them to quickly re-engage with learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff ensure that pupils are kept safe and good attention is given to their welfare.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced.
- School leaders effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a planned, consistent thread through lessons and daily assemblies. As a result, pupils know how to be a respectful and tolerant citizen in modern Britain.
- Parents, staff and placing authorities are equally positive about the school.
- The headteacher has worked effectively to ensure that the independent school standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - a form of governance is established to provide challenge and support to the headteacher and to help them drive forward improvement quickly
 - staff are able to take on leadership responsibilities in the absence of the headteacher in order to maintain a consistent quality of provision
 - an effective system to assess and record pupils' academic and social, emotional and behavioural progress is introduced and judgements checked to ensure the reliability of outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teaching is appropriately interesting, engaging and uses the range of resources available in the school to inspire and enthuse pupils to learn and make good progress
 - teaching provides appropriate opportunities to challenge pupils, particularly the most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is the proprietor. He has successfully drawn upon his skills as an educational psychologist and teacher to create a small, nurturing provision for the interim placement of pupils who are awaiting new schools following exclusion or placement breakdown. The headteacher is highly committed to the school and well respected by his staff and pupils alike.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is a weakness in the school. Tests in core subjects used to identify starting points, do not accurately capture pupils' abilities. Assessment is inconsistent across subject areas and there is no external checking of judgements. Termly progress is measured predominantly on the basis of scores from test papers. As a result, information about pupils' progress is unreliable.
- Additionally, although some psychological tests are completed, the progress pupils make socially, emotionally and behaviourally is commented on anecdotally rather than being formally recorded and monitored. This limits the school's ability to evidence credible outcomes for pupils.
- The inspector observed the headteacher's skilful interventions with pupils and staff. However, as the headteacher is absent for a significant proportion of time to undertake other work, the school is often left without effective and consistent leadership and management. Other staff are not able to assume leadership responsibilities in order to maintain a consistent quality of education in his absence.
- Leaders do not systematically check the quality of work undertaken by staff. Teaching assistants are not clear about their areas for development and there is no formal link between staff pay and performance.
- The school's assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses is overgenerous. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of what needs to be improved.
- The school's commitment to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The curriculum includes trips, discussions and regular activity in the local community. This, combined with a flexible personal, health and social education programme, teaches pupils about equality of opportunity, fundamental British values and diversity. The inspector observed two assemblies in which pupils showed high levels of support and respect for each other, and a history lesson in which a video about Ancient Egypt prompted a positive discussion about the religion and culture of Islam.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met for leadership and management of the school's work, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The headteacher acknowledges that there is an urgent need for governance in the school and has recently begun establishing contact with potential governors.
 - Previously, the school has relied on advice from paid consultants. The headteacher is beginning to build positive relationships with local headteachers and works well with a placing local authority.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is available on the school's website. The designated safeguarding lead and two deputies have completed recent enhanced training. They have also received additional training on radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, e-safety, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation. Staff work well with outside agencies to support pupils and their families, for example to improve attendance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Many learning resources are available in the school but teaching is very similar across the areas of learning and this sometimes fails to capture pupils' interest and imagination.
- Pupils are not aware of what they need to do to achieve at the level they are capable of. The learning goals identified in the front of pupils' workbooks in core subjects are generic. They do not provide specific guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils complete a significant amount of work in their books and are making progress. However, while the teachers' feedback to pupils is in line with the school's assessment policy, areas for development are often generic and pupils are not consistently given time to review their work and respond to their learning goals.
- Teaching does not sufficiently challenge the most-able pupils. Time is sometimes wasted while these pupils wait for others to finish because the work is too easy for them.

- Teaching assistants are well deployed and some have developed strong behaviour management skills. Consequently, positive relationships between pupils and teaching assistants ensure pupils generally remain focused on their learning.
- Leaders have ensured all the independent school standards for teaching, learning and assessment are met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The headteacher has ensured that the school actively promotes the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Pupils feel well cared for and the relationships between pupils and staff are one of the school's greatest strengths. Pupils know who to go to if they are feeling upset or angry, and know they will be listened to.
- Good attention is paid to the health and safety of pupils. The headteacher has ensured that all safety and fire checks are undertaken regularly to ensure the school building is safe. Pupils take part in fire drills on a termly basis.
- Staff are trained in de-escalation and positive handling, and abide by the school's physical intervention policy. The physical restraint of pupils is exceptionally rare. When it does occur, it is thoroughly documented and assessed to check why the incident happened and how similar situations can be avoided in the future.
- Attendance is good. The vast majority of pupils attend all, or almost all, of the time. For a small minority with previously very high rates of absence, their attendance is showing significant, sustained improvement.
- Careers guidance is provided through personal, health and social education. Speakers from a local college, with which the school has links, provide impartial advice to secondary-aged pupils about their potential career options.
- There is a culture of openness at the school. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. Daily meetings provide an opportunity for any concerns or observations to be shared, in order to keep everybody safe. Pupils and staff know who they can go to if they need help.
- The development of social skills and emotional awareness underpins much of the school's work. Pupils respect each other's views. During a discussion about the importance of being positive, two pupils disagreed about the view that if you want something enough, the right attitude and self-belief will make it achievable. They listened to each other and responded with respect and courtesy, even though they did not come to an agreement.
- All the independent standards are met for pupils' personal development and welfare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school achieves its aim of improving pupils' behaviour during the time they are in the school. Pupils generally arrive at Applied Educational Solutions with poor attitudes to learning, demonstrating negative behaviours and with low self-esteem. Staff and pupils said that the positive behaviour observed at all times of the school day during the inspection was typical. Pupils commented on the fact that they are calmer and better behaved at this school than at those they may previously have attended. Serious incidents and the fixed-term exclusion of pupils are exceptionally rare.
- Leaders have ensured that a full range of policies and procedures are in place, so that the independent school standards for this aspect of the school's work are met.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils now feel more positive about their education. The school successfully re-engages them with learning and provides an environment in which they can reflect, work hard and progress in their learning.
- The progress pupils make from different starting points is unclear. Assessments carried out when pupils start at the school are unreliable. Therefore, the school is unable to provide consistent, accurate information about pupils' outcomes.
- Where limited information on pupils' outcomes is available, for example in mathematics and science, pupils make variable progress.

- Pupils' reading skills are developing more consistently. This is particularly as a result of effective phonics (the link between letters and sounds) teaching for the youngest pupils. The information the school gathers on the improvement of reading ages demonstrates that this work is having a positive impact.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school requirements related to pupils' outcomes are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141607 |
| Inspection number | 10006305 |
| DfE registration number | 308/6004 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 8–14 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 6 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Christopher O'Nions |
| Headteacher | Christopher O'Nions |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £24,375 |
| Telephone number | 07949 678173 |
| Website | www.appliededucationalsolutions.com |
| Email address | applied.educational.solutions@outlook.com |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Applied Educational Solutions is an independent co-educational day school for up to 10 pupils aged eight to 14 years.
- The school was registered with the Department for Education in December 2014 and this is its first standard inspection.
- The school is based in converted retail premises in Enfield, London. It makes use of local parks, a primary school, a community centre and a boxing club for physical education and recreational activity.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or are currently under assessment by their local authority. Pupils typically have social, emotional and mental health difficulties and many have additional learning needs.
- The school aims to provide 'for all individuals a positive ethos and quality of education that will facilitate the development of self-confidence, strategies and skills for successful learning and the ability to use them in all aspects of life'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education and was announced one working day before the inspection began.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. He toured the school site with the headteacher and evaluated a wide range of documentation, including the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- The inspector visited lessons and assemblies, and considered the quality of work in pupils' books, together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the teacher, teaching assistants and pupils.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a senior representative from a placing local authority.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for the results to be shown. The inspector considered the results of the school's own parental survey and spoke to parents over the telephone.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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