

Fine Arts College

Centre Studios, 41 – 43 Englands Lane, London, NW3 4YD

Date of visit 23 April 2015

Purpose of visit

This was an unannounced emergency visit at the request of the Department for Education which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), particularly those concerned with welfare, health and safety.

Characteristics of the School

Fine Arts College Hampstead is an independent sixth form college in Belsize Park that specialises in the arts and humanities and also provides a range of courses for students aged 15 to 19 years. The college was founded in 1978 by the current joint proprietors, who are also the joint principals, with the aim of 'creating a college where the arts and humanities are given special attention... in a learning environment that acts as an effective bridge between school and university life'.

There are currently 150 pupils on roll (46 boys and 104 girls). Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). One student has been identified by the school as having a statement of special educational needs. Almost all students progress to university or art school. At the time of the visit, the school was registered to take up to 126 pupils and had applied to increase this to 160.

The college has been accredited to an ISC Association but has not yet had an inspection by ISI. The college was last inspected in March 2012 by Ofsted.

Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b)]

The Regulation is not met.

The child protection policy in place at the time of the visit shows concern for pupils but the arrangements described in it do not fully reflect the latest statutory guidance. The safeguarding and staff recruitment procedures are deficient and not sufficiently well understood by staff across the school. The child protection policy provides no definitions of the different kinds of child abuse to assist staff in recognising it. References to statutory and other guidance and documentation are out of date and not accurate. Staff are not uniformly clear about policy requirements. Almost no staff could recall having heard of, or seen, Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). Not all staff have received the required level of safeguarding training including their duties both to children in need and to children at risk of harm.

The principals, who are also the proprietors, were not available during this inspection, although it was possible to have a telephone conversation with one of the principals, who was teaching students in Paris. Consequently, it was not possible to discuss in detail or with certainty how they carry out the annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures and the effectiveness of implementation. Senior staff who met inspectors were unclear about the arrangements for the review and relevant records were not available for scrutiny.

The college stated that senior staff attend local authority training on a regular basis but records were not available to confirm the training of all staff at the required level. The job description for the DSLs does not include the requirement to attend appropriate training and they have not been trained at the required level. The DSLs were not clear about procedures in the case of allegations made against staff including senior staff, and also about the role and identity of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The child protection policy does not refer to the LADO or describe the function of the LADO in providing advice and presiding over the investigation of any allegation or suspicion of abuse directed against anyone working in the school. Awareness of correct procedures for dealing with various types of allegation was fragile. The DSLs were unaware that government guidance, KCSIE includes reference to children in need as well as children at risk.

Students feel safe and well cared for, and are emphatically positive about the school, feeling that the school “knows us all”. They appreciate the rest of the community being supportive of them in an unobtrusive way and feel there is no bullying. In case of any concern, they would go to the principal or their tutor or to any of the teachers, either individually or with other students. They acknowledged receiving a pack about e-safety on arrival at the school and stated that they were unaware of any cyber-bullying. They commented that because of the small size of the common room, they instead use local establishments for socialising off site. Registers are taken in each class but there is no signing out procedure, with the result that the school does not always know exactly which students are on site.

The PSHE scheme of work is comprehensive and understood by staff. The staff handbook contains no code of conduct for staff (nor does one exist within other documentation). Attendance registers for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are incomplete and mostly completed in pencil. Absences are routinely followed up by senior staff. The child protection section of the staff handbook is brief and requires all concerns to be reported to the principals or safeguarding coordinators. Staff interviewed were aware of first aid training received but not of safeguarding training. Staff show notable care for the students and have a good awareness of some school procedures and knowledge of the students. They weren't aware that they might refer child protection matters directly to outside agencies. None knew exactly whom to contact in the local authority. Staff are committed to the students and share

information about them at weekly meetings and are confident that because of the small size of the college, everyone knows everyone. Staff do not receive specific guidance on how to avoid allegations of abuse, though this is discussed informally. The same applies to safeguarding information. In discussion, the principal demonstrated uncertainty about current requirements for safeguarding policy and procedures.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18, 20 and 21]

The Regulation is not met.

The single central register of appointments (SCR) and a number of staff files were scrutinised. The SCR does not meet requirements because of failures to carry out and record all the necessary employment checks on staff before they begin work; and to record all the required information for each member of staff including the date documentation was checked, date DBS certificate was obtained, identity check, address confirmation, or prohibition orders. In addition, not all staff are included on the SCR. The school has recently changed its management information system and the member of staff responsible for completion of the SCR has only recently taken on this responsibility. No specific training for the responsibility has yet occurred.

The recruitment policy makes no reference to the requirements of KCSIE. The staff files are incomplete. In some cases there are no references on file. For almost all recent appointments, requests for DBS checks were made after the staff had begun work at the school, and in one case there was no risk assessment or other information indicating what safeguarding measures had been put in place during that period. There have been no prohibition checks on newly appointed staff.

Regulatory action points

The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, Health and Safety, paragraph 7(a) and (b)

- Improve the wording and implementation of the safeguarding policy as follows:
 - Ensure that references to statutory and other guidance and documentation are brought up to date and accurate;
 - Provide definitions of the different kinds of child abuse;
 - Ensure that all staff have read Part 1 of KCSIE;
 - Ensure that all staff, including the principals and DSLs, have received the required level of safeguarding training;
 - Implement appropriate procedures for the proprietors' annual review of the safeguarding policy and its effectiveness;
 - Update the job descriptions for the DSLs;
 - Ensure that all staff are aware of procedures to be followed in the case of allegations made against staff including senior staff, and of the identity and role of the LADO;
 - Clarify the role and responsibilities of the LADO for investigations;
 - Ensure that staff understand references to children in need as well as children at risk of harm;
 - Include a code of conduct for staff, appropriate to the nature of the school;
 - Ensure that students are aware of procedures to follow when they encounter inappropriate behaviour by local people in the vicinity of the school;

- Provide guidance to staff on how to help them avoid allegations of abuse;
- Ensure that all staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that anyone can make a referral to children's social care.
- Implement appropriate measures to ensure that the school knows which students are on site at any given time, and that registers are completed fully and in ink;
- Develop and implement a recruitment policy that details the requirements of KCSIE;
- Ensure that staff files are always kept secure, up to date and complete.

ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, paragraph 21

- Ensure that the single central register is maintained in accordance with the requirements of the ISSRs and KCSIE [paragraph 21 (1) and (3)]

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

- Ensure that there is sufficient senior leadership and management capacity and expertise to maintain the single central register in accordance with the requirements of KCSIE and to monitor its maintenance;
- Carry out a thorough review of training and awareness in respect of ISSRs for all staff, including senior staff.