

SUSI EARNSHAW THEATRE SCHOOL

68 High Street, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN5 5SJ

9TH FEBRUARY 2017

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Susi Earnshaw Theatre School is an independent day school in Barnet, north London, for secondary pupils aged 11 to 16 years who wish to pursue a career in the performing arts. The school opened as a full-time secondary school in 1999 and moved to its existing premises in 2004. It is housed in a former community theatre. The school is owned by the two founders, who are responsible for its governance. Management is shared between the principal, who is one of the proprietors, and the headteacher. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 pupils on roll, 10 boys and 28 girls. The total number of pupils includes five pupils aged 10 years who joined the school in September 2016. There are five pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. There are no pupils who require support for English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous ISI integrated inspection was in March 2015.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an announced material change visit at the request of the Department for Education to assess the school's proposal to accept children aged 9 to 10 years. The school is currently registered for ages 11 to 16 (Years 7 to 11) and wishes to extend the range to include ages 9 to 16 (Years 5 to 11). It does not intend to increase the overall numbers in the school or make any building alterations. The maximum number of children will remain at 60. The school currently has one Year 5 and four Year 6 pupils, who are taught together. The change has already been implemented and the school is seeking retrospective permission.

The visit focused on the school's compliance with those regulations within the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), concerned with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; the welfare, health and safety of pupils; the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; the premises and accommodation and the quality of leadership and management of schools.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

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

The regulation is met and is likely to be continued to be met following the material change.

The school makes suitable provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. It has a detailed cross-curricular provision, which is monitored annually, and the school timetable provides for two personal, social, health and citizenship educations (PSHCE) lessons each week. The schemes of work in curriculum subjects and in PSHCE include the study of different cultures and faiths and the importance of British values and

democracy. In addition, a 'circle time' for tutor groups allows for further exploration of current affairs and PSHE topics.

Welfare, health and safety– safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b)]

The school does not meet the regulation.

The school's policy for safeguarding does not provide suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school because it does not fully reflect the latest statutory guidance. The policy does not ensure consideration has been given to the specific safeguarding issues of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2016 and Annex A)*. Additionally, the policy does not provide clear guidance on how the school monitors safety on the internet; nor does it refer the reader to a staff code of conduct and a whistleblowing procedure. Although the school is not responsible for the pupils when they are engaged in theatre work, the policy must make reference to the safeguards in place for its pupils working in theatre environments. The policy is not reviewed annually by both proprietors.

The separate whistleblowing policy and a staff code of conduct are understood by staff. The school has a recruitment policy which is referred to within the safeguarding policy; the procedures outlined in the recruitment policy are not sufficiently detailed. There is no reference to the requirement that a barred list check must be undertaken for staff with a delayed disclosure and barring service (DBS) certificate and no reference is made to a check for prohibition from management. The school no longer runs an agency for children's theatre work. This responsibility is now undertaken by outside agencies and parents liaise with the agencies independently. The agencies which organise the licences for children to work in theatre productions outside of the school require all agency and theatre workers to hold a clear DBS check.

The school has a good relationship and appropriate contact with the local children's services and the local authority designated officer. The leadership is aware of its responsibility to refer to the local authority to seek advice, and does so when required. There have been no disclosures of abuse to the school and any concerns which have arisen have been appropriately referred on to the external agencies. Staff have a clear understanding about the requirement for reporting immediately any concerns they might have regarding the safety of pupils. They know what to do in the event of a disclosure by a child, or an allegation against another member of staff or the head. They understand that they can make a referral themselves. In discussion, pupils said that they feel very safe within the school. They report that they would go to any member of staff if they had a concern, including the school's leadership. Pupils understand the rules for the use of mobile phones and other devices and are clear about how to stay safe on-line. Tutor periods, circle time and PSHE are used effectively to discuss any concerns that pupils may have and promote their understanding on how to keep safe.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), the deputy DSL and all staff are appropriately training in safeguarding. Staff have appropriate induction training when appointed. They have a clear understanding about how to recognise the signs of abuse and the importance of listening to pupils. School records and staff discussions confirm that staff had received a copy of KCSIE Part 1. However, the staff and school leadership have no knowledge of the content of Annex A, which gives information on specific safeguarding issues. Staff receive regular update training in safeguarding matters and weekly staff meetings facilitate discussions on any pupil concerns. The school keeps records of staff training and who conducted the training.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9]

The regulation is met and should continue to be met after the material change, but the school should ensure the policy for misbehaviour and exclusions is made available to parents, (Part 6 3(a)).

A suitable written behaviour policy is effectively implemented. The policy sets out a code of conduct for pupils, promotes good behaviour through a reward system and outlines the sanctions which will be applied for misbehaviour. A record of sanctions is appropriately maintained, showing that such occurrences are few.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10]

The regulation is met and should continue to be met after the material change.

The school has an effective anti-bullying policy. The policy is available to parents on the school website. The school's strong pastoral care and culture of mutual support ensures that bullying is prevented as far as reasonably possible. Pupils, during discussions, report that they have not seen any bullying in school and that any unkindness is rare. Any such occurrences are addressed quickly by school staff.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 11 - 13 and 16]

The regulations are met, and are likely to be continued to be met following the material change.

Health and safety is managed effectively by the leadership. Records for plant maintenance and servicing are suitably maintained. An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place. Additionally, a 'safety walk' is done weekly and any issues are identified and programmed for improvement. Risk assessments are completed by staff members annually for their areas of work. There is a suitable risk assessment procedure in place for visits outside of the school.

Fire safety is appropriately managed with fire drills taking place every half term and these are documented and evaluated. Equipment is tested every six months, and an audit of fire safety undertaken by specialist contractors.

First aid is well managed and a suitable room is available for ill or injured pupils. All staff are trained in first aid. Accidents are suitably documented and more serious incidents reported as required. Parents are contacted promptly if pupils become ill or injure themselves at school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

The regulation is met and is likely to be continued to be met following the material change.

Supervision levels are appropriate. The school has high staff-pupil ratios, with very small pupil groups of five or six in each year group and pupils are supervised at all times throughout the day. Year 10 and 11 pupils are allowed to leave the premises at lunch times and are required to sign in and out if they do so.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – Admission and attendance registers [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15]

The regulation is met and is likely to be continued to be met following the material change.

A suitable admissions policy is available to parents on the school website and all pupils are registered twice a day by their form tutor. Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 2(a) and (b)]

The regulations are not met.

Some checks against the barred list for staff with late Disqualification and Barring Service (DBS) certificates have not been undertaken as required because leadership do not have a secure understanding of the checks required when a DBS certificate is late. In all other respects, procedures for checking staff before they take up their appointments are correctly recorded and appropriate documentation retained in staff files.

Premises of and accommodation at schools [Part 5, paragraphs 23 – 29]

The regulations are not met.

The regulations are likely to be continued to be not met following the material change because the school are unsure about how they can adapt their buildings to include showers and changing facilities for pupils. Toilet provision is appropriate but the school does not have a changing room with shower facilities for pupils over the age of 11 years. The premises are suitable to teach pupils in Years 5 and 6, and provide sufficient space for their curriculum needs. There is a small outside playground for relaxation. The premises are maintained to a satisfactory level with suitable risk assessments in place. All other requirements for acoustics, lighting and water supply are satisfactory.

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

The regulation is met.

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 in and management of schools [Part 8, paragraph 34 (a) (b) (c)]

The regulation is not met.

The principal and the headteacher do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their obligations to ensure compliance with all ISSR regulations consistently. They do not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of current legislation regarding recruitment checks and therefore do not actively promote pupils' well-being.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that approval is granted to the school for the material change to accept pupils from the age of 9 to 16 years. The pupils under the age of 11 years in the school are receiving an education of core subjects suitable for their age. They report they are happy and feel safe in the school. The teachers have adapted their teaching styles and schemes of work for the age range. The school has strong pastoral care. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection. The leadership and management are mindful of the majority of their responsibilities, although they expressed uncertainty regarding some recruitment checks and the required content of the safeguarding policy. The safeguarding policy requires updating to reflect the requirements of recent regulatory guidance. The premises do not have suitable changing or shower facilities, which are required for pupils when they reach the age of 11 years.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

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

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

- Improve the wording and implementation of the safeguarding policy as follows:
 - Ensure the policy refers to the most up to date statutory guidance of KCSIE 2016 and Annex A.
 - Include in the arrangements for peer abuse a specific mention of the dangers of 'banter'.
 - Include guidance for staff on how to respond and report concerns about children in need or at risk.
 - Be clear that if a crime may have been committed, the matter should be reported to the police.
 - Make reference to the guidance in the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing procedure.
 - Confirm how the school makes provision for keeping children safe on-line through ensuring appropriate IT filters and monitoring systems are in place.
 - Outline the safeguards in place for children working in theatre environments.

- Ensure the proprietors take responsibility for reviewing the safeguarding policy annually.

- Ensure that barred list checks are always carried out and recorded whenever staff start work before receipt of the criminal record check.
- Ensure that staff appointed to management positions are checked against the list of those prohibited from management.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 2(a) and (b)]

- Ensure that the required checks, notably DBS checks, are undertaken on all adults in regulated activity with pupils.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23 (1)(c)]

- Ensure suitable changing accommodation and shower facilities are provided for pupils over the age of 11 years.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (a), (b) and(c)]

- Ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that regulations are met consistently and the welfare of pupils is actively promoted.