

Marathon Science School

1-9 Evelyn Street, Surrey Quays, London SE8 5RQ

Inspection dates

28 February 2024

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(g)

- These standards were not met at the previous inspection because curriculum thinking lacked coherence. Across the curriculum, the school had not identified what pupils needed to learn and when. Staff's subject expertise was variable and the school had not provided staff with sufficient professional development opportunities. The checks on pupils' learning were variable. These weaknesses had a detrimental impact on pupils' learning, including the qualifications that they achieved. Furthermore, the previous inspection found that the school did not have appropriate arrangements in place to support pupils who may join the school at the early stages of learning to read.
- This inspection found that leaders have worked hard to tackle the weaknesses identified. They have established an appropriate action plan which sets out suitable tasks and success criteria. Leaders have overhauled the curriculum plans and documentation. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read benefit from appropriate support, including in phonics.
- In some subjects, plans are new and have not yet been embedded. Staff are still getting used to these changes and there remains variability in how the curriculum is implemented. For example, teaching does not routinely check if pupils have remembered the intended content. Plans do not consistently consider pupils' different needs and abilities. The school is still in the process of establishing assessment procedures in different subjects in order to check if pupils know and remember curriculum content.
- These standards continue to be not met.

Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(a) and 2(2)(h)

- At the previous inspection, creative education was only provided to pupils in Years 7 and 8. This meant that the school was not providing all the required areas of learning.

- This inspection found that the school's curriculum offer has improved. Pupils in all year groups now benefit from creative education. The school offers a range of subjects which meet the requirements of the independent school standards.

- These standards are now met.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)

- At the previous inspection, the school was not providing pupils with suitable, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- Leaders have worked effectively to address these weaknesses. Pupils now benefit from a well-planned careers programme which starts in Year 7. Leaders have forged partnerships with local colleges and have put in place arrangements for pupils to receive impartial careers advice. The programme has enabled pupils in Year 11 to experience work shadowing opportunities and for others to learn about the world of work. Leaders have arranged for visitors, including guest speakers, to meet with pupils to talk about different pathways to further education, work or training.

- These standards are now met.

Paragraphs 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), and 2A(1)(f)

- These standards were not met at the previous inspection because the school had not fully considered the relationships and sex education (RSE) statutory guidance. The policy was not published on the school's website and parents and carers had not been consulted about the school's provision for RSE. The required content was not being taught.
- This inspection found that following the previous inspection, the school introduced a new programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which includes RSE. The content of this programme now meets requirements. Leaders have consulted with parents appropriately. The programme is being implemented in each year group. The policy is now published.
- These standards are now met.
- The school has not ensured that all of the independent school standards in this part are met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraphs 2(2)(d) 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(i), 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi) and 5(b)(vii)

- At the previous inspection, these standards were not met because the school's provision for pupils' personal development was weak. The lack of a suitable PSHE programme was significantly impacting pupils' readiness for life in modern Britain. The time given to PSHE was too limited. The PSHE programmes did not teach pupils about British values. They did not pay due regard to the protected characteristics. Pupils were not provided with sufficient opportunities to learn about public institutions and services in England. Furthermore, the school organised very few experiences to encourage pupils to explore and develop their various interests and talents.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders introduced a new programme for PSHE. Since then, the programme has been implemented regularly in all year groups. The programme provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the world around them and

other people, including those with protected characteristics. Leaders enhance the programme with educational visits, including to places of worship and residential trips. Pupils now receive weekly timetabled PSHE lessons which are taught by a specialist teacher for this subject. The work in pupils' books demonstrates that the programme is being followed and that it covers a range of important themes and topics in an age-appropriate way.

- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(3) and 32(3)(b)

- At the previous inspection, the school had not provided parents with information about the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school had not provided information about how it would meet the needs of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- The school's post-inspection action plan explained that leaders had rewritten guidance and policies in relation to SEND and the school's provision for pupils with EHC plans. This inspection found that leaders have realised their plans. This information is available to parents.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- These standards were not met at the previous inspection because leaders, including the proprietor body, had not ensured the school's compliance with the independent school standards. The proprietor body had not put systems in place to check the effectiveness of leaders' work. The inspection found that leaders' knowledge of the independent school standards was particularly weak.
- Following the previous inspection, the proprietor body took the decision to make some changes to the school's leadership roles and responsibilities. The current headteacher, who was the school's founding headteacher and led the school for some time, returned to the school. As a team, leaders have worked together effectively to tackle the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. This inspection found that many of the previously unmet standards are now met. Nevertheless, there is more work to do to ensure that the standards related to the quality of education and teaching in the school are met consistently. There remain inconsistencies in curriculum thinking and implementation. The changes that have been made need to be firmly embedded.
- This inspection found that paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) continue to be not met. However, 34(1)(c) is met. The school actively promotes the well-being of pupils.
- The school has not made sure that all of the independent school standards in this part are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135901
DfE registration number	209/6409
Inspection number	10324342

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Seven Hills Educational Trust
Chair	Kamil Canbay
Headteacher	Uzeyir Onur
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,500 to £12,000
Telephone number	020 7231 3232
Website	www.marathonschool.com
Email address	info@marathonschool.com
Date of previous standard inspection	10 to 12 May 2023

Information about this school

- Marathon Science School is an independent boarding school with an Islamic ethos.
- The school is registered to cater for up to 120 boys aged 10 to 19 years. At the time of this inspection there were no pupils aged under 11 or over 16 on roll.

- The school's last inspection was a standard inspection in May 2023. At that time, the school was judged to be inadequate and did not meet all the independent school standards.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The trustees have appointed the school's founding headteacher back to this post. He is supported by the school's assistant headteachers.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection since its last full inspection in May 2023. This inspection was conducted without notice.
- Following the full inspection, leaders were asked to submit an action plan. This was judged by Ofsted to be not acceptable in October 2023 and was subsequently rejected by the Department for Education.
- The focus of the inspection was to check whether the school complied with particular requirements within parts 1, 2, 6 and 8 of the independent school standards. The inspection also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central register of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the independent school standards are met.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. The inspector toured the premises, visited lessons and reviewed a range of documents, including pupils' work, policies, curriculum plans and resources.
- The inspector met with three groups of pupils and a group of staff.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils’ work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2)
 - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 5(b)(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
 - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and

- 5(b)(vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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