



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Red Balloon Learning Centre – Northwest London

March 2022

School's details

School	Red Balloon Learning Centre – Northwest London	
DfE number	310/6204	
Registered charity number	1109947	
Address	Red Balloon Learner Centre – Northwest London 13 Kenton Road Harrow Middlesex HA1 2BW	
Telephone number	020 8864 6433	
Email address	admin@nwl.rblc.org.uk	
Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Taylor	
Chair of governors	Ms Geraldine Norris	
Age range	11 to 17	
Number of pupils on roll	40	
	Seniors	40
Date of visit	14 March 2022	

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Red Balloon Learning Centre – Northwest London is an independent, co-educational day school. The school is a registered charity governed by a group of local trustees. The school has recently been granted approval to extend its provision into a nearby building. All pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and all have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Five pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils attend daily on a reduced timetable which is tailored to meet their needs.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the EQI inspection of September 2021. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 25 (maintenance of premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 29 (outdoor space for PE and play)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened its provision for safeguarding. Through the effective introduction of a programme of training, governors, leaders and staff now understand and implement consistently the requirements of current statutory guidance relating to safeguarding. They have also introduced suitable arrangements to monitor its effectiveness. Staff understand the requirements of the code of conduct.
- 2.5 Records of regular meetings indicate that the safeguarding team works closely together to promote pupils' well-being. They ensure that relevant safeguarding information about individual pupils is regularly shared with staff, parents and pupils and that procedures are monitored. In discussions, pupils reported that there are many opportunities to raise any concerns and that they feel they are listened to by staff when they do so. They also confirmed that they receive guidance on how to stay safe online. Inspection evidence from safeguarding records confirms this view and that action is taken when pupils' specific needs are identified. Whilst there have been no incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence, including online, since the previous inspection, it is clear that senior leaders and staff understand how they should be dealt with. This includes seeking external advice if necessary. Members of staff are clear about whether pupils are respectively in need or at risk. They understand that if any pupils are victims of harmful sexual behaviour or potentially so, safeguarding partners and the police should be contacted promptly.
- 2.6 The school's central safeguarding records now includes entries identifiably grouped into categories and concerns are shown clearly and with suitable detail. Members of the safeguarding team have noted the reasons for making or not making a referral and from thereon monitor the agreed path. Records also show what subsequent actions have been taken, including when a local authority threshold is not met.
- 2.7 In discussions, staff demonstrated a full awareness of their training and their safeguarding responsibilities. They confirmed that they would know how to respond if a situation of child-on-child sexual abuse arose. Staff receive suitable training when new to the school and, from thereon, update training about the most recent statutory guidance is regularly provided. Staff have completed training in the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Central records of staff attendance at training are kept systematically, so that absentees at the time of training can be identified and training arranged.
- 2.8 Arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures and, in discussions, staff showed an appropriate awareness of what may constitute a low-level concern. An annual review of safeguarding has not occurred since the previous inspection but in discussions leadership and governors showed an awareness of the need to strengthen their procedures for the next review and are clear about how this will be achieved. A scrutiny of the minutes of a recent board meeting where safeguarding was discussed confirmed an appropriate depth and breadth of oversight. The proprietors ensure that suitable recruitment checks are required before staff begin work and that the school has suitable whistleblowing procedures. The use of technology is suitably controlled.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety and fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 11 and 12]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 Since the previous inspection, an effective health and safety audit has been carried out by external specialists and all areas of the premises are now being monitored systematically for health and safety issues. A designated member of staff with overall responsibility for health and safety now ensures that records of relevant checks are systematically logged and monitored. Any defects or hazards are now remedied or removed without delay. An appropriate fire safety policy is implemented. Procedures for emergency evacuation are carried out effectively and suitably recorded; regular fire drills are held. Suitable fire risk assessments for all school buildings have been undertaken with any recommended actions being swiftly addressed. Fire signage is clear throughout the school and all members of staff are confident to handle fire situations.
- 2.11 Since the previous inspection all staff have undertaken appropriate training in health and safety and in fire safety and records of this training are now maintained and monitored by leadership and governors.

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

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school ensures that pupils are always under appropriate supervision while attending school. There are sufficient members of staff in place to maintain suitable supervision.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school now ensures that attendance registers are maintained accurately for all pupils so they can be properly supervised. The admission register is maintained appropriately and the school operates effective systems to store the required information.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

- 2.16 The school meets the standard.
- 2.17 The school has improved its approach to the management of risk and it now ensures that suitable risk assessments are implemented effectively. Risk assessments are in place for all external visits and areas of the school such as for teaching rooms and recreation areas. Electronic means of monitoring pupils' access to and egress from school have been installed ensuring that security arrangements are appropriate.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance and outdoor space for PE and play [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 25 and 29]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 Since the previous inspection the school has carried out a programme of maintenance on its premises, including for the outdoor areas, to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety

and welfare of pupils are ensured. All hazards identified as part of the previous inspection have been suitably rectified. The school has appropriate space for outdoor play and physical education takes place offsite.

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

- 2.20 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 and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 Those with leadership and management positions now demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and ensure the standards are met consistently. Suitable systems have been introduced for monitoring the implementation of the school's procedures by senior leaders and governors. Governors now evaluate the effectiveness of policies on a regular basis and record the information for monitoring purposes. Through more regular meetings, governors now ensure that appropriate training is in place in all areas of welfare, health and safety and that action is taken to address any weaknesses identified without delay. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure the active promotion of pupils' well-being.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders, other members of staff and the chair of governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.