

Inspection of Finchley and Acton Yochien School

6 Hendon Avenue, Finchley, London N3 1UE

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on staff before they start working at the school. However, leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that all staff receive the necessary safeguarding training in line with current requirements. The school is not sufficiently alert to safety and welfare concerns. Leaders have not ensured that all staff know what actions to take should any safeguarding concerns arise.

Staff develop caring and professional relationships with pupils. Many parents and carers commented on the school's encouraging and nurturing approach. Pupils are happy here and enthusiastic about their learning.

Pupils are well mannered and their behaviour is respectful to adults and each other. Pupils are taught to be kind and think about the feelings of others. Through the school's curriculum, pupils are encouraged to explore and value the natural world. For example, children in early years collected and counted conkers from the school's grounds when learning mathematics.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils' achievement. However, some arrangements for the teaching of early reading, including in early years, do not help pupils to learn to read swiftly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Staff encourage pupils to enjoy listening to stories. Pupils participate with enthusiasm while staff read stories. For example, children in the early years joined in readily with a 'bear hunt' around the classroom during story time. Children receive daily phonics teaching starting in the Reception Year onwards. Children are taught letter sounds in a specific order so that they build up their phonics knowledge and build on what they have learned before. However, leaders do not ensure that the books children read contain the phonics sounds that they know. This disjointed approach means that pupils do not become fluent readers as quickly as they could.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It combines the expectations of the Japanese curriculum with the English national curriculum and statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. Generally, leaders have carefully sequenced the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember from the Nursery Year onwards. Teaching supports pupils to build secure knowledge and skills as they move up through the school. For example, in the early years, children develop their coordination and agility by learning to skip using hoops. They develop their physical control and confidence by using their skills to jump over skipping ropes as they get older. Leaders and teachers make suitable adaptations to teaching and resources to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn the same curriculum as their peers. The school provides regular feedback to all parents about their children's learning. Staff work effectively with parents and external experts and make sure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate help. However, the

impact of workload on the well-being of staff is not taken into consideration routinely by the school's leaders.

Children learn the routines of the school from the time they join the school. For example, children in the two- to-three-year-old provision who recently joined the school already know to change their shoes and line-up quickly and in an orderly way. Typically, pupils behave appropriately in lessons. They listen and follow teachers' instructions. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted.

Leaders and the proprietor place a high priority on teaching pupils about the importance of showing respect and taking on responsibility. For example, children in the early years sing songs of thanks for their food every day at lunchtime. Pupils are taught about cultures and traditions that are different to their own. Pupils have access to a range of extra-curricular clubs, including gymnastics, soccer and abacus mathematics club. Pupils enjoy educational visits, such as outings to the zoo and to the local shops. Pupils are taught about age-appropriate healthy relationships. This starts in the early years. However, despite the requirement to do so, the school does not have a relationships-education policy in place. Leaders and the proprietor have not consulted with parents on the content of a relationships education curriculum.

Leaders and the proprietor do not make sure that the independent school standards are met securely and consistently. They have not ensured compliance with the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage. Leaders have not ensured that all staff who work with pupils have received safeguarding training and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Some policies published on the school's website do not meet the requirements of the independent school standards. This includes the school's complaints policy. Other policies are missing. The proprietor is very much involved in the school and liaises with leaders regularly. However, the proprietor does not ensure that the school fulfils all its statutory obligations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders and the proprietor make sure that staff are safe to work with pupils before they start working at the school. They make sure there are enough members of staff to supervise pupils adequately.

Leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that staff have the appropriate safeguarding knowledge to identify and report any concerns. A small number of staff have not had any safeguarding training. Some other staff have not received any annual safeguarding refresher training. Others have received training that does not cover all that is required. As a result, staff do not have a comprehensive and secure understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding know when to liaise with local safeguarding partners. However, details of low-level concerns are not recorded and

organised well enough. Record-keeping does not provide assurances that all safeguarding concerns are identified. These weaknesses pose a potential risk that pupils and families may not receive early help or support and that some safeguarding concerns may go unnoticed or unreported.

The proprietor has not made sure there is robust strategic oversight of safeguarding. The safeguarding and child protection policy is not comprehensive in detail. For example, the policy does not set out procedures regarding child-on-child abuse. The school has not ensured that all members of the school's safeguarding team are trained to the same standard as leaders with overall responsibility for safeguarding.

The school's leaders do not promote a safeguarding culture that encourages all staff to be vigilant and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Leaders are of the mistaken view that some safety and welfare concerns are unlikely to arise at this school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders and the proprietor do not promote a strong safeguarding culture. This puts pupils at risk of potential harm. The school needs to make sure that everyone is vigilant and maintains an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Records of low-level safeguarding concerns are not collected and organised well. As a result, some low-level concerns may be missed. The school must have robust systems in place for recording and collating low-level concerns.
- Leaders and the proprietor have not made sure that all staff receive appropriate and regular safeguarding training. This includes some leaders and the proprietor. As a result, school staff do not know their legal responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. The school must make sure that all leaders and staff have appropriate training to safeguard pupils' welfare effectively.
- Leaders and the proprietor have not made sure that all the school's policies contain appropriate content, in line with legal requirements and the independent school standards. Leaders have not made sure that these policies are published on the school's website. As a result, parents are not provided with accurate information. Leaders must ensure that policies are compliant with statutory guidance, made available to parents and others and published on the school's website.
- Leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that the school has a written policy for relationships education and that parents have been consulted in the developing and reviewing of the policy. The policy is therefore not available to parents and others. Leaders and the proprietor must ensure that the school has a written policy for relationships education and that parents have been consulted in the developing and reviewing the policy, and that the policy is made available to parents and others and published on the school's website.

- The approach to teaching early reading is disjointed. Pupils are not provided with books that are closely aligned to the phonics they know, including in early years. As a result, they do not learn to read with confidence and fluency quickly. Leaders should make sure there is a systematic approach to teaching phonics, with books that are matched closely to the sounds that pupils learn.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	131128
DfE registration number	302/6107
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10286395
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 6
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Katsutoshi Maeda
Headteacher	Junko Tanabe
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7000 to £9000
Telephone number	020 8343 2191
Website	www.maedagroup.co.uk
Email address	admin@maedagroup.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 to 11 July 2019

Information about this school

- This is a non-selective school for boys and girls up to age six years. The school has provision for two-year-olds. Most pupils attending the school are of Japanese heritage. The main language used in lessons is Japanese, and specialist teachers teach English as an additional language.
- The school operates from two premises. The addresses are: 6 Hendon Avenue, London N3 1UE; and Playing Field, Queens Drive London W3 0HT.
- The previous standard inspection of the school took place in July 2019. The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor, headteacher, manager and other senior leaders at the school. Translators were present on two days of the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors scrutinised staff and parent responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors observed lunchtime and behaviour at less structured times.

- Inspectors checked the maintenance of premises and health and safety arrangements.

Inspection team

Andrea Bedeau, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen Jaeggi

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(a) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with primary education at the school is provided with relationships education,
 - 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)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

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)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year; and

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a

- panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
- 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is-
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
 - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Section 3 The safety and welfare arrangements

- 3.2 Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. The requirements in this section explain what early years providers must do to: safeguard children; ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children; promote good health; manage behaviour; and maintain records, policies and procedures.
- 3.4 Providers must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant local safeguarding partners. The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. To safeguard children and practitioners online, providers will find it helpful to refer to 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations'.
- 3.6 Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs

of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. These may include:

- significant changes in children's behaviour
- deterioration in children's general well-being
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- children's comments which give cause for concern
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation and/or
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children, for example: inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images

Providers may also find 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'16 helpful.

- 3.7 Providers must have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and to the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'18. All schools are required to have regard to the government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance, and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to refer to this guidance. If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay. This means the local children's social care services and, in emergencies, the police.

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