

WHITEFIELD SCHOOLS AND CENTRE



PROSPECTUS

(Text only version)

Introduction

Whitefield Schools and Centre (the School) is the largest special educational organisation in Europe. The School has an international reputation for its expertise and resources. It is situated on the outskirts of North-East London, within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It is a Foundation Special School that admits pupils from approximately 30 Local Authorities throughout London and the Home Counties. We make provision for pupils who need a teaching and learning environment that is different from mainstream schooling in order for them to progress towards a fulfilling life-style that is as independent as possible.

The Whitefield environment has been designed to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and to fulfil the relevant conditions set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended in 2005). Our accessibility plan influences our site development plan, which continually improves access for disabled pupils as it unfolds: lifts, hoists, automatic gates and doors have been installed; difficult to operate equipment has been fitted with pupil-friendly controls, and so on.

We admit up to 300 pupils, aged between 3 and 19 years, who have a wide range of educational disabilities. Whitefield is a stimulating and lively organisation which, in order to successfully address pupils' learning needs, operates as three different schools that specialise as follows:

- Sensory Impairment and Learning Difficulties.
- Communication and Interaction, Primary.
- Communication and Interaction, Secondary.
- **Whitefield consists of three schools on one site.** Each school has its own specialist focus but draws on the expertise of other specialists, as required, for pupils' individual educational programmes. The schools specialise in communication and interaction, addressing the needs of autistic, hearing impaired and speech and language impaired pupils; multi-sensory impairment, with particular expertise in educating deafblind pupils; and delayed cognitive development, with learning difficulties ranging from severe through to profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- **Whitefield is a source of support and encouragement for parents.** We have a family support team who have between them management, special educational needs, consultancy and counselling qualifications and experience.
- **Whitefield has a centre for professional development and information.** Whitefield's advanced study facilities are housed in the purpose-built Rangoonwala Centre, and our university-validated diploma and Masters level courses attract teachers from across the region. Our special education library (the Turner Library) provides members from all over the world with information.

Founded just after the turn of the 20th century, Whitefield has evolved by adopting the best practices in special education and pioneering new methods. Finance for our major projects has come from a combination of public funds and private income raised by the Whitefield Development Trust.

WHITEFIELD REPRESENTS A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND CHARITABLE SECTORS IN THE FIELD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.

Our Aims are to:

- Perpetuate a safe, secure and supportive ethos;
- Facilitate learning that is enjoyable and stretches individuals;
- Promote self-confidence, positive behaviour and respect for others;
- Support pupils in making healthy choices;
- Encourage pupils to contribute to the wider community;
- Foster economic well-being through multi-agency collaboration;
- Contribute to professional development and information, regionally and nationally.

Our Mission is to provide the highest possible standards of education and support for pupils, families and staff, by:

- Creating a welcoming and purposeful organisation in which equal opportunities are offered to everyone and diversity is valued;
- Sharing information with colleagues and parents;
- Actively involving staff, pupils and families in decision making and planning;
- Providing effective administration and financial management;
- Identifying and striving to obtain appropriate and adequate resources;
- Evaluating our work in the light of research into good practice elsewhere;
- Ensuring that all staff receive ongoing training;
- Assuming collective responsibility for maintaining and improving our effectiveness.

STAFFING AT WHITEFIELD

Members of staff at Whitefield are probably without parallel in respect of their collective experience and specialist qualifications.

Whitefield is a multi-disciplinary organisation with around 220 members of staff, most of whom are teachers and learning support or teaching assistants. We have teams of speech therapists, physiotherapists, medical staff, midday assistants, site services and administrative staff, plus an information technology assistant. Classroom staff are based in separate schools within Whitefield whereas support staff are deployed to serve throughout the organisation.

Sensory Impairments and Learning Difficulties (SILD) School.

The 'SILD' school occupies a purpose-built building on the south side of the site, which was opened in 1998. It admits pupils aged between 3-19 years with educational disabilities arising from sensory impairment, physical impairment and/or delayed cognitive development. Many of the pupils in SILD have combinations of disabilities that result in their having complex needs. Most pupils also have severe to profound learning difficulties.

Communication and Interaction Primary (CIP) School.

The 'CIP' school provides education for pupils aged between 3-11 years. It admits pupils who are on the autistic spectrum, language impaired or hearing impaired, and consequently have communication and interaction difficulties. Most CIP pupils also have moderate to severe learning difficulties.

Communication and Interaction Secondary (CIS) School.

The 'CIS' school provides education that meets the learning needs of pupils aged between 11-19 years who have autistic spectrum conditions, speech and language impairment or hearing loss and whose levels of attainment are predominantly below expectation for their age.

For more detailed information please refer to the separate leaflets about our schools.

Support Services

Family Support Team provides a service for parents and carers. It is a redefinition of the "Parents as Partners" philosophy which has been a part of the school's practice for many years. Three part time members offer between them 7 days of Family Support each week. The team supports parents and encourages their active involvement in the education of their children.

Music therapist - works full-time, with the support of a part time therapist, in our schools to help pupils to improve their motor, sensory and communication skills.

Medical staff - nurses from the local NHS Primary Care Trust are based at Whitefield to provide healthcare for pupils. A dentist, audiologist, doctor and chiropodist also visit.

Physiotherapists and speech therapists - work within the multi-disciplinary team structure at Whitefield, but are employed by the local NHS Primary Care Trust.

Occupational therapists work with pupils who have been referred for support and run a clinic for children who need special seating.

Midday assistants - come into school daily to help pupils develop eating skills and to supervise playtimes.

Centre for Professional Development and Information (CPD&I) - provides a comprehensive in-service training programme for all staff, with standards based on national qualifications: National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for learning support and teaching assistants, post-graduate qualifications (including Masters-level awards) for teachers. Course contents match the specialist approaches found in our schools.

CPD&I also runs a routine cycle of short training courses in: a variant of sign-supported English (Signalong), British Sign Language (BSL), mini-bus driving, race equality, child protection, first aid and swimming safety etc. This training programme ensures that our pupils have the benefit of being taught by adults who are exceptionally well qualified.

CPD&I provides an **outreach service for mainstream schools** in the Local Authority area and **overseas outreach** to selected schools in India and Pakistan. Whitefield also has links to schools in European countries, and benefits from teacher exchanges.

Administrative support - a dedicated team look after the site, the finances, personnel issues, and reception, and provide clerical services to the School's managers. Members of the team also recruit and organise volunteers to help with many activities including driving the school's minibuses. They liaise with CPD&I to place the many vocational students who seek work experience at Whitefield Schools.

For more information please refer to our booklet on support services.

What the office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) said about Whitefield in May 2006

Whitefield is a truly inclusive school that provides an outstanding education for all its pupils. One parent wrote to say, 'The school is an exemplary and dynamic place and I do not know what we would have done without them. I give them ten out of ten'.

Teaching is excellent across the school. Support staff are highly trained and their team-work with teachers is outstanding. There is an imaginative curriculum and programme of therapy that effectively meets the individual needs of different groups of pupils. All aspects of 'Every Child Matters' are clearly woven into all curriculum planning. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are emphasised and make a significant contribution to pupils' growing self confidence and maturity.

Pupils in the Foundation stage have their learning needs met in a relaxed, but purposeful play environment. They quickly settle into daily routines of school life and start to flourish.

The sixth form provides an excellent education. Pupils have good access to appropriate life-skill activities, work related opportunities and accredited courses. All pupils have the opportunity to gain qualifications by the time they leave the school. They acquire useful skills to help them prepare for the next stage of their education or employment, as well as taking part in community activities whenever they can.

Pupils make outstanding progress throughout the school in relation to their challenging personal targets. Pupils are assessed each year against the pre-National Curriculum levels (P-levels) or National Curriculum levels and this information is used in individual planning and whole school target setting. The excellent use of systematic assessment is a key factor in the progress made by pupils over time.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils relate very well to each other and to all adults. Learning is made fun and there is a positive ethos of reward and celebration of individual achievement.

The total commitment of staff is reflected in the ways in which health and safety are promoted in all aspects of school life. Pupils feel safe; they adopt healthy lifestyles and follow safe practices, as well as they are able.

The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent as is their involvement in the community outside the school. There is a wealth of opportunity for pupils to learn about music, beliefs and lifestyles of different communities around the world as well as the multicultural nature of British society.

The continued professional development of all staff is strength of the school and pupils' learning benefits from the very high standard of specialist knowledge and support.

The high quality of leadership and management has a significant impact on the achievement of pupils and the progress they make.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all the school does and are grateful for the support and training they themselves receive.

For Ofsted's full report, please refer to the School Website at www.whitefield.org.uk .

Admissions

Whitefield's capacity is for approximately 300 pupil places, depending on how much space individuals need. The School does not have a set yearly admissions number and admission will normally be restricted to children for whom statements are maintained under the 1996 Education Act.

Pupils may be admitted to Whitefield:

- up to the number approved in the school's recognised accommodation limit of 307;
- when they have a statement of special educational needs and the school is named in Part IV of the statement and there is space;
- when the school considers that an individual pupil's needs could be met at Whitefield without unreasonable detriment to other pupils. The school can subsequently be named on the statement.
- as emergency placements, for the purposes of assessment when they do not have statements of special educational needs. [Such admission will be made only when the Local Authority, the School, parents and any relevant professional who would be involved in the assessment are agreed that an emergency placement is the best way forward];
- as emergency or provisional placements where, for example, a child arrives unexpectedly in the area of the School and exhibits significant learning difficulties of a kind that would normally warrant a statement. [The School will only make such admissions following consultation with parents, governors and the relevant Local Authority]; and
- on a temporary basis when they do not have a statement and are not the subject of an assessment e.g. a child who has received serious injuries but is likely to recover in the long term. [Where a statutory assessment is not commenced, admissions will only be made following consultation with parents, the relevant Local Authority, governors, and where necessary the principal educational psychologist and the child's paediatrician].

For more detailed information on the admissions process please refer to the parents' guide.

School Opening

The school year is divided into three terms, each with a half term break. The dates correspond with those of other schools within the London Borough of Waltham Forest, give or take a day or two at the start and finish of each term.

Pupils enter the School at 9.15 a.m. and go home at 3.30 p.m. They have a lunch-time break of at least fifty minutes between 12.00 and 1.30 p.m.

Arranging Visits

Visitors are welcome at Whitefield. Please telephone us on [020 8531 3426](tel:02085313426) to arrange a convenient date and time for your visit - we can send you a map of how to find us.

If you are enquiring about a place for your child, we will need to know:

1. your child's name, address and date of birth.
2. a brief description of his/her educational disabilities.
3. whether s/he currently has a statement or is being assessed.
4. your name, address and telephone numbers where you may be contacted.
5. the name of your Local Authority.

You need not bring your child on your first informal visit, when you will have an opportunity to look around the School and talk to a member of staff. Even when we have met your child, we will not be able to offer him/her a place on the spot, as his/her statement must first be written specifying Whitefield and we must check when a suitable place will be available (see Admissions).

Availability of Places

The number of pupils due to leave Whitefield's schools is calculated at the beginning of each term and this indicates how many places we will have available for the start of the following term. Usually the majority of pupils leave in July each year when some transfer to secondary schools at age 11 (end of year 6 in National Curriculum years), and some take up special courses at Further Education Colleges. Consequently most of our new pupils are admitted in September, but occasionally some start in January or April.

The number of applications to Whitefield is always higher than the number of places available, so we try to consider requests as early as possible and to limit parents' anxiety as much as we can.

Pupils' Rights

Many of our pupils are extremely vulnerable, as they find it difficult to fully express themselves. We are determined to ensure that their rights are understood and protected. At Whitefield we have agreed a strict code of ethics which recognises that each pupil has the right to:

- an education which will enable them to achieve their potential - physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- be seen and respected as an individual first - not to be defined by his or her disability.
- the recognition of their talents, sensitivities, interests and beliefs.
- be treated with courtesy and dignity in an environment which is appropriate to their needs.
- privacy wherever possible - in thought, emotion and opinion as well as in physical space.
- as much self determination as is compatible with the rights and needs of others, and with their own welfare and safety.
- make choices, within the limits of their ability to understand the range of options open to them, and to understand and take responsibility for the consequences of their choice.
- be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account when decisions are made which will affect their life.
- progress towards autonomy by trying to do new things.
- personal relationships, and for those relationships to be respected.
- be protected from harm from others and not to be exposed to situations beyond their ability to cope.
- opportunities to learn responsibility and respect for others, and to play a useful and meaningful role in their everyday environment.
- be recognised as a young adult when adolescence is reached - regardless of the degree of their continued dependence on others for their care.
- attend their own conferences and contribute as appropriate.
- expect respect for their family and community.
- be an equal and fully participating member of the community.

Copies of our full 'Code of Ethics' are available from the school/website.

Discipline

Staff at Whitefield aim to teach their pupils what is and what is not commonly acceptable in our society, and to aspire to standards of behaviour worthy of respect. We reinforce this message by using positive words and actions ourselves. Improving pupils' ability to communicate is seen as central to the management of behaviour at Whitefield. Staff help pupils to develop self-control, to increase their capacity for self determination, and to reduce their dependence on others. If physical intervention has to be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, parents are consulted on the most appropriate way of handling their child and an agreed procedure is written down.

Whitefield's 'Code of Ethics' and 'Behaviour Policy' contain a more detailed explanation of our approach to behaviour.

Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. For many of our pupils, because of the nature of their special educational needs, the concepts of bullying and harassment do not exist. However, where bullying is evident, the school will not tolerate it. We believe that all pupils should feel confident and secure in the knowledge that staff will deal with incidents promptly, fairly and effectively.

A copy of our 'Anti-Bullying' Policy is available on request from the school/website.

Parents' Rights

We regard parents as equal partners. However, we are sensitive to the role that each parent wishes to play in their child's education. We are committed to sharing information with parents and encourage them to reciprocate by:

- welcoming them into an atmosphere which fosters mutual trust and respect for culture, religion, ethnic background and child rearing practices;
- giving them information about a range of special services, so that they can give and receive advice about their child's education;
- actively encouraging them to contribute ideas for developing their child's educational programme by giving them regular updates about the work their child is doing and the methods we are using;
- offering a whole range of home/school links from social gatherings and workshops to review conferences;
- giving them the opportunity to become active members of the Friends of Whitefield, whose committee of parents and staff works to make extra resources available for us;
- providing a room and facilities specifically for parents and families;
- having an accessible complaints procedure.

The Curriculum

Whitefield aims to offer all pupils:

“a broad and balanced curriculum that provides rewarding and stimulating activities for pupils and helps them prepare for increasing involvement in a fulfilling social and cultural life”

Pupils require a curriculum that seeks to promote their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The school differentiates learning outcomes and approaches for each child within one of the following levels:

1. **Formal** level includes the National Curriculum which is organised into 'key stages' based on age (a Foundation Stage with early learning goals through to a post-16 stage designed for school leavers) and consists of the following subjects: English, maths, science, history, geography, technology, PE, music, art, RE and a modern foreign language (at secondary school age);
2. **Semi-formal** level that includes subjects giving access to the National Curriculum.
3. **Pre-formal** level that includes areas of learning that underpin the National Curriculum.

All pupils receive a curriculum that is delivered so as to afford:

- a formal programme of lessons, which is timetabled;
- differentiation and individualisation, to ensure that pupils receive an education that is relevant and adapted to each individual's needs and abilities;
- reinforcement, through the positive attitudes of staff;
- measures to make it accessible, for each pupil as an individual; and,
- achievements that are transferable, for those pupils moving on to other schools.

A Copy of Whitefield's Curriculum Framework is available, on request, from the school/website.

Local Authorities' Curriculum Policies

You may want to read the curriculum policy of the Local Authority for the area in which you live. We can help if you are not able to identify the appropriate address for any of the Local Authorities that send children to Whitefield.

Teaching Approach

We seek to provide an optimal learning environment with clear and consistent boundaries that form a secure framework for every pupil. Lessons for pupils who are very dependent upon their teacher revolve around structured routines. Lessons for more experienced learners often follow topics and encourage independent enquiry. The main characteristic of all teaching and learning at Whitefield is that it emanates from an interactive approach that is sensitive to individuals' needs.

Our teachers' emphasis is upon providing pupils with experiences that enable them to absorb new information and learn from it. This approach entails creating opportunities for pupils to develop their self-awareness and feel they can make choices, exert influence, and have their preferences respected; enjoy themselves and discover what they value in other people; and, engage in systematic observation, problem solving, and negotiations.

Whitefield's Teaching and Learning Policy explains our approach at some length. This is available from the school/website.

Sign Bilingualism

A growing minority of pupils at Whitefield are severely or profoundly deaf, as are many of those who are dual sensory impaired (i.e. deafblind). In relation to these pupils, our schools subscribe to a 'sign bilingual' philosophy. Sign bilingualism is an approach to teaching deaf pupils that uses both British sign Language (BSL), the language of the deaf community, and English, the language of the hearing community. We value these languages equally, respect deaf culture and regard the development of a positive deaf identity as important.

Homework

We endeavour to enlist parents' support for the continuation of their children's educational programmes at home, particularly to develop effective communication or when the management of challenging behaviour is a priority. Some pupils are given conventional homework tasks, but guidance on how much time they are expected to set aside varies from individual to individual.

Copies of our Homework Policy are available from the school/website

Sex Education

The law requires us to provide sex education for all registered secondary aged pupils, but leaves such provision optional for primary aged pupils. It also requires that HIV, AIDS and other aspects of human sexual behaviour should be taught as part of sex education rather than as part of science.

The governors of Whitefield, in deciding upon our policy, fully recognised that any sex education programme should complement and support the role of parents as well as reflecting their moral and religious beliefs. Consequently, teachers and parents work together to decide on what to include within the programme for each child. Generally speaking, we aim to foster knowledge about human physical, emotional and social development and explore personal attitudes and values. Pupils are encouraged to practise skills for effective communication and interpersonal skills as well as build up their confidence and decision making abilities.

The implementation of our sex education policy requires a sensitive, collaborative and well informed approach. On this basis, we offer sex education unless parents request that their child be withdrawn. Parents wishing to do so should write to the Headteacher with a brief explanation of their reasons.

Collective Worship and Religious Education

Whitefield does not have a single space large enough to have all of its pupils and staff together for formal acts of collective worship, nor would such a gathering capture the intended spirit of the occasion. However, the aims of religious education and collective worship are implicit in our expectations of how pupils relate to each other and to staff.

Weekly assemblies are held within each school and are an important part of school life. They allow pupils and adults to meet for the purpose of celebrating and reflecting on individual and group worth and/or exploring religious and secular themes. Care is taken that assemblies are relevant and meaningful and many themes are linked to work across the curriculum. Themes include 'Myself', 'Others', 'the world', and explore concepts from the main religions. Sessions at the beginning and end of the day in classes may contain similar themes in a basic form - simple greetings to each other can promote recognition, interaction, communication and respect. Organised assemblies further develop the themes and may include celebrations of major festivals which are reinforced through displays, events and discussions. At later stages of development, many pupils may go on to discuss moral issues, to enjoy stories from their own and other cultures, and to understand points of doctrine and religious observance.

Parents may withdraw their child from all or part of our religious education curriculum by writing to the Headteacher with a brief explanation of their reasons.

Whitefield does not have an affiliation with any particular religion or religious denomination.

Physical Activities, Sport and Leisure

We believe that physical and sporting activities, experienced in safe and supportive environments, contribute to our pupils' physical development and sense of well-being.

A wide range of physical activities is offered regularly by Whitefield's schools, including movement and dance, games, gymnastics, swimming and outdoor pursuits such as adventure play, horse riding and sailing. Football training is available and there is ongoing support from members of Tottenham Hotspur FC.

Some pupils make off-site visits to the East London Handicapped Adventure Playground (ELHAP). Older pupils use ICT facilities at the City Learning Centre. Groups of pupils also make use of a range of sports and leisure facilities in the area, from ten pin bowling to walking in Epping Forest.

Our emphasis is on creating supportive learning environments which encourage maximum participation, reflect the interests of our pupils, and which are differentiated to take into account our pupils' physical, emotional and educational needs. Through opportunities to take part in enjoyable physical activities, we aim to provide our pupils with leisure pastimes that can be pursued into adulthood.

Complaints

Complaints and concerns are viewed positively at Whitefield. They offer a means to correct misunderstandings, give explanations and, if necessary, to review and improve the service we offer. Every new parent receives a letter detailing key staff who they can contact about any issue affecting their child. We hope that the majority of concerns can be dealt with by informal, direct contact with those staff.

Should parents wish to make a more formal complaint they can do so by writing to the Headteacher, stating clearly the nature of their complaint and that it is a formal complaint. All such complaints will be treated with confidentiality and the Headteacher will deal with the matter within 5 school days. The Headteacher will write to all complainants to tell them about the decision reached and about any proposed action. The reasons behind that decision and action will also be explained.

Should parents be dissatisfied with the Headteacher's response or not have received a response within the 5 days, they may refer the matter to the governing body. They can either write to the Headteacher or to the clerk to the governing body via the school. A hearing with the whole governing body or, more likely, a panel drawn from it may then be called. The complainants will be provided with written information on the form that such hearings follow and about the time scale involved. A supporting friend or representative may be brought to the hearing and an interpreter will be provided if requested.

Copies of the full 'complaints procedure' are available from the school/website.

Teaching Aids and Systems

Many different communication systems are used at Whitefield. They include PCS Symbols, Sign Supported English, finger spelling, British Sign Language, and Braille.

Teaching aids in use include electronic communicators, computers (several with built-in touch screens), and interactive white boards.

Our buildings accommodate a variety of teaching and learning styles. We have some relatively large classrooms, some 'quiet' rooms used for working in smaller groups, and there are some 'individual' rooms where teaching is done on a 1: 1 basis.

The development of play, mobility and social skills is supported, where appropriate, for each pupil by timetabled access to our hydrotherapy pool, soft play areas and adventure playgrounds.

Organisation into Years and Classes

Various organisational structures are used to group pupils at Whitefield, although reference to the age of pupils is always a factor. Pupils are generally in age-band classes which reflect their National Curriculum year groups. However, groups may occasionally include pupils from more than one year.

The heads of our schools are responsible for forming their pupils into groups when and where appropriate, and for organising the resources necessary to teach those groups. Age, needs, skills, aptitude and temperament are carefully considered before a pupil is allocated to a group or class.

Most pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs specify how much staff time should be allocated to them and comment on appropriate group settings. Our pupils receive from 0.13 up to 0.3 of a teacher's time and a complementary share of a learning support or teaching assistant's time.

As a general rule, pupils aged 5-7 should receive a **minimum** of 21 hours teaching per week; pupils aged 8-11, 23.5 hours; and pupils aged 12-16, 24 hours per week. We are mindful of these numbers of hours at Whitefield, although distinguishing between activities that count as time spent on the teaching of pupils and less formal educational activities is not always easy. Prolonged periods of conventional classroom-based activity would be more than some of our pupils could endure, while others are keen to pursue their academic studies at every available opportunity. What matters most is that pupils are engaged for the requisite amounts of time in activities that result in a relevant, broad and balanced range of planned learning outcomes.

Absences from School

Our rate of unauthorised absences, when a pupil is away without the Headteacher's permission, is very low. Our pupils rarely truant, but occasionally parents keep their children away from school without realising that they must ask for the Headteacher's permission. Parents can, for example, ask to take their child out of school for a family holiday, but agreement can normally be given for no more than ten days in any one school year. This would be called an 'authorised' absence, as would days when a pupil is ill - providing parents let the school know, or, when necessary, send in a doctor's note. It is parents' legal responsibility to make sure that their children come to school and miss as little as possible. We have to keep detailed registers and send statistics into the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) every year.

Our figures for last year are included on separate sheets.

Trips and Social Education Activities

Outings and taking part in recreational activities with classmates not only gives pupils the chance to enjoy new experiences but can also improve their learning of social skills, mobility and communication. All pupils have the opportunity to go on trips to places of interest that enhance their education. Visits to local shops, the library and the park can be extensions of class work in maths, English, geography, science, art and history. Pupils have the opportunity to attend riding lessons at the Chigwell Riding Stables, where they are supervised by trained instructors. Trips further afield may use the school's safely equipped minibuses, or pupils may go by public transport to help them socialise with other people and prepare them for independent travel.

Permission from parents for their child to join routine outings is sought when they join the school. Details of any unusual trips are sent out in advance and parents are asked to confirm their agreement for their child to take part.

Costs and Charges

Governor's wish to make clear that they will do all in their power to ensure that parents from low income families need have no concern about charges related to the admission of their child to Whitefield.

Trips and activities – some are paid for from within school budgets. Generally, however, we will ask for voluntary contributions to cover the costs of travel, food, entrance fees and so on. Such costs are always kept to a minimum and parents are asked to send in contributions at the beginning of each term to cover planned outings. The Whitefield Association is prepared to subsidise parents who cannot afford to contribute the full amount suggested. If riding lessons are wanted, parents are asked to pay the actual cost of these.

School meals - pupils who are not entitled to free school meals have to pay for their lunch unless they bring a packed lunch. Parents can pay either weekly or termly in advance and should ensure that the correct amount is safely wrapped and marked with their child's name and class. The amount payable per meal is reviewed annually and is kept in line with Local Authority charges.

Use of School premises – priority is given to activities organised or endorsed by the School (e.g. clubs run by voluntary organisations for children with SEN), but the governing body occasionally allows other organisations or individuals to hire certain parts of the premises for use outside normal school hours. The scale of charges reflects the size of the area involved and the cost of making it available (power, materials and labour).

Governors have given the Headteacher discretion to determine who will be allowed to use the School's premises and to vary the charges.

Please refer to the School's Charges and Remissions Policy.

Uniform

Whitefield does not have an official school uniform. Pupils should wear practical, comfortable, hard-wearing clothes. Plimsolls/non-marking trainers, shirt, shorts/skirts or other suitable clothing and swimwear and towels are needed for PE and sports. Each item should be clearly labelled with the pupil's name.

Pupils in CIS who integrate into Highams Park Technology College may wear that school's uniform.

The wearing of all items of jewellery is discouraged as it can scratch, catch, distract or get lost. Simple studs are the only acceptable jewellery for pupils with pierced ears.

The School will not be held responsible for loss of or damage to personal property. Items of value should not be brought to school.

Pupil Progress and Achievement

Initial Conferences

Parents are invited to meet staff about six to eight weeks after their child joins Whitefield. At this Initial Conference we present a written report about how their child is settling, an assessment of attainment in the main subject areas and set specific goals to be worked on during the following year.

Annual Reviews

The pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs is reviewed each year. These Annual Review Conferences should be attended by parents and by the various professionals who have an interest in the pupil's progress. Prior to the meeting parents are sent a draft report of any proposed amendments to the Statement. A progress report on the targets set at the previous Review and new targets for the following year are also sent. These are discussed at the conference meeting. After everybody's comments have been taken on board a type-written final version of amendments to the Statement and the new targets are circulated.

Annual Reviews:

- check that statements remain appropriate;
- put amendments to Local Authorities, as required;
- indicate what educational goals and targets should be set for the coming year; and
- agree any action and, if so, by whom.

Informal Reviews

Parents can ask for an informal review of their child's progress and discussions with staff whenever necessary. In any event, an Interim Review Conference will be held about half way between Annual Reviews (or sooner if there is an urgent need). These meetings are usually less formal and are an opportunity for parents to discuss any ongoing issues about behaviour, self help skills or general progress.

Progress Reports

Parents receive an annual progress report at the end of the summer term. This includes a round up of activities, experiences and skills learned over the year, often with photographs of significant achievements. Results of formal assessments are also included.

Special Educational Advice Conferences

Formal educational advice is provided by Whitefield whenever:

- a child is placed in one of our schools whilst waiting for a draft 'Statement of Special Educational Needs' to be drawn up by his or her Local Authority;
- a child's needs may have changed significantly, so that a reassessment is called for; or,
- a child is due to transfer to another school at the end of year 6.

From September 2006, such advice is liable to be presented in a format consistent with the Government's Common Assessment Framework.

Examinations

Given the nature of the school, it is only very occasionally that one of our pupils sits for GCSEs or 'A' levels. However, when we find that a pupil has the ability to work towards examinations we make sure that they follow an approved, recognised and accredited syllabus. Whitefield works closely with a local mainstream secondary school in the area to secure access to appropriate facilities for pupils with special needs.

Nearly all of our secondary-aged students undertake programmes of study leading to ASDAN or OCR (ALL) awards.

The statistics we sent for inclusion in last year's national database on examination results are detailed on separate sheets entitled 'Whitefield's Performance'.

SATs

Pupils who have reached the required National Curriculum levels will take end of Key Stage SATs (Standard Assessment Tasks) at the ages of 7 and 11. Pupils working at a level below Level 1 of the National Curriculum are assessed on 'P' level scales using PACE.

Our results from last year are detailed on the sheets with statistics about 'Whitefield's Performance'.

Integration into Mainstream Schools

Some of our pupils spend time in mainstream schools, either as an extension of the educational programme we provide or by way of preparation for their eventual transfer. We have a particularly close working relationship with Highams Park City Technology College, where some of our most academically able pupils integrate for lessons in science, technology and other subjects. A few of our pupils have gone so far as to pass GCSE examinations at Highams Park in recent years.

Careers Education and Work Experience

Whitefield contributes to a 'transition plan' which is prepared for every pupil aged 14 and over by his or her Local Authority, when appropriate. The plan identifies potential career routes and the work needed to support the opportunities identified. Each plan is tailored to suit the individual to whom it relates. Pupils, parents, staff and sometimes specialist advisers are all involved in preparing the plan.

Where possible and appropriate, Whitefield provides limited work experiences. Some pupils, for example, prepare refreshments for Whitefield Development Trust and Governing Body meetings or make and sell products around the school. There are also opportunities for many secondary students to have broader experiences, placements and training with external organisations and companies. Often the school arranges careers and work visits to such organisations for parents and pupils and we accompany them during those visits. Some students go on link, work experience and vocational courses at Further Education Colleges whilst enrolled at Whitefield.

Post-16 Leavers

Secondary pupils may leave us at any time from Key Stage 4 up until they are aged nineteen, depending on the availability of places in other establishments, further educational opportunities or the start of a job.

Caring

We put parents in touch with statutory and voluntary agencies who can support pupils and their families beyond the school day. Our own staff sometimes make home visits. Whenever possible, we will attend Social Service and other reviews, and we will liaise closely with any other services involved in a child's care. Staff are encouraged to see themselves as pupils' advocates without letting this role hinder pupils' chances to express their needs and concerns directly. Close links are maintained with other educational establishments to ensure that every pupil is afforded the best possible opportunities throughout his or her life.

We also recognise that parents/carers have an intimate knowledge of their children. Our family support teachers foster the exchange of that knowledge and aim to support the development of partnerships between home and all the professionals involved with each child, at school and beyond. Our parents' room, located in the family support area, offers the chance to relax and make a drink when visiting.

The school's network of therapists, nurses and volunteers work closely with classroom staff to ensure that every pupil receives appropriate care and attention.

Whitefield has a **Child Protection Policy** and members of staff receive regular training relating to the identification of, and response to, any incidents that may give cause for concern. We believe that pupils' welfare is of paramount importance and want to work closely with parents to ensure that their children are protected at all times.

Whenever possible, we intend to discuss any child protection issues with parents first; however, there may be occasions when our concerns are such that we are obliged to go through a process based on the *All London Child Protection Procedures*. Those procedures require our Child Protection Coordinator to contact Social Services first; although, we shall still keep you informed about what to expect, unless we are forbidden to do so. Our commitment to support is at its strongest when families face difficult times.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you think we might be of assistance. Enquiries should be addressed to:

The Family Support Team
Whitefield Schools and Centre,
Macdonald Road,
Walthamstow,
London,
E17 4AZ.

Telephone: 020 8531 3426

e-mail: sen@whitefield.org.uk

Further information, including copies of School policies, can be found on our website at www.whitefield.org.uk Whitefield's policies and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly, so that they continue to complement one another. For example, our Special Educational Needs Policy is reviewed annually, as required by the Government, to ensure that it remains consistent with the implementation of other key documents such as our Teaching and Learning Policy and our curriculum Framework. Our Publication Scheme is included on the website, and it lists all other policies and procedures.

A profile of Whitefield Schools and Centre, including statutory information about our formal assessment results and absence rates, is available in a loose-leaf form. The Government publishes its version of our profile in many different languages on the following website: <http://schoolprofile.parentscentre.gov.uk>

Our SEN Policy and our Accessibility Plan are also available as separate documents, although they should be regarded as annexes to this prospectus.