

Whitefield Schools

Macdonald Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4AZ

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, including directors, have addressed in full the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Leaders took immediate action to make sure that pupils' behaviour and safety are consistently well managed with respect and dignity. Directors now play a full part in the strategic direction of the school.
- Leaders have strengthened the culture of safeguarding. The physical and mental well-being of pupils is now at the heart of everyone's work. Safeguarding is the top priority for leaders and staff at Whitefield Schools, where pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders and staff have rigorously implemented a new behaviour policy, securing an analytical approach to managing pupils' behaviour positively.
- Leaders have ensured that all adults have the right skills to respond to incidents of challenging behaviour. Key personnel, trained as coaches, provide highly effective support and guidance for colleagues. As a result, pupils behave exceptionally well for most of the time.
- Excellent training and development have been the main drivers for securing outstanding teaching and boosting leadership capacity at all levels.
- Teaching is highly responsive to pupils' needs and abilities. The stimulating curriculum is tailored to inspire pupils to achieve their best. This prepares pupils extremely well for adult life so that they are able to make a positive contribution in society.
- New systems to monitor, record and evaluate pupils' progress and behaviour provide leaders and staff with a clear profile of pupils' capabilities and needs. However, behavioural targets are not measurable. Leaders do not assess pupils' social and emotional development.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly to make sure they are on track to achieve their challenging targets. Consequently, all groups of pupils across all key stages make outstanding progress in a range of subjects.
- Children in the early years make impressive gains in their learning because teaching is outstanding, and leadership is exceptionally strong.
- Sixth-form provision is excellent. High expectations, together with innovative and personalised programmes, ensure that students achieve extremely well.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen systems for measuring the impact strategies have to improve pupils' behaviour, by setting measurable targets.
- Implement a system for assessing the progress pupils make in their social and emotional development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have risen to the challenge of tackling the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They have transformed their initial shock and disappointment into highly effective policies and practice that have given staff the necessary strategies to manage well the challenging behaviour of some pupils. This has significantly improved pupils' welfare and safety. Both staff and leaders are now held fully to account for the management of pupils' behaviour, so that pupils are helped to be kept safe and secure.
- All staff are trained to deal appropriately with challenging behaviours. They are well supported by a team of coaches, who have trained intensively to secure a universal approach to managing pupils' behaviour in a positive way. Throughout this period of change, leaders have sustained high staff morale.
- Senior leaders have spearheaded a different approach to build up a comprehensive profile of pupil behaviours. There is now incisive analysis of why pupils display challenging behaviours, both in school and at home. This informs leaders with robust evidence to devise successful strategies to help reduce pupils' anxiety levels and help them to cope better.
- As a consequence, staff, pupils and parents cope more effectively with difficult behaviours, so that pupils are happier, learn more and interact appropriately with others. However, targets in pupils' personal behaviour plans are not measurable. Furthermore, leaders have yet to assess the progress pupils make in their social and emotional development. As a consequence, leaders do not know precisely the impact strategies have on pupils' behaviour and mental well-being.
- Improved communication, with regular meetings about pupils' behaviour, has secured a shared understanding of high expectations for pupils' personal development. This now matches leaders' and staff's aspirations for pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders have remained focused on strengthening the quality of teaching, resulting in a higher proportion of strong and highly effective teaching. Senior leaders work well with middle leaders in training them how to assess the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders provide teachers with valuable feedback on how to improve their practice. Training and professional development opportunities are closely aligned to the school's priorities and individual needs.
- Leaders are methodical and measured in their approach to school improvement. They test out new research and ideas in small group projects. They evaluate and reflect on the impact of these initiatives, and if effective, roll them out across all three schools. All staff are encouraged to undertake further qualifications to enhance their practice and to develop their leadership skills. Indeed, senior leaders are adept at spotting new talent, nurturing it, so that leaders have the drive and capacity to improve the school still further.
- Assessments are woven into the learning outcomes, enabling teachers to track pupils' progress accurately, both short and long term. Teachers are encouraged regularly to reflect on how they have promoted effective learning in their lessons. They are held to account by middle leaders for the progress pupils make, and to identify those pupils at

risk of not achieving their targets. Additional support is rapidly put in place to boost these pupils' learning.

- Leaders constantly challenge their own and others' practice. Detailed analysis of the impact of their work has recently resulted in a revision of targets to make sure pupils are stretched in their learning, as well as revising aspects of curriculum pathways.
- Leaders are outward looking and work with a host of different providers. Staff have significant expertise and share this through the outreach services, alliances with other schools and training opportunities through the Whitefield research and development centre.
- The curriculum is highly responsive to pupils' individual needs, abilities and interests. Termly, expressive arts weeks, including art and music, enable pupils to learn from new experiences, to showcase their talents, and to work with other pupils. Pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects as well as making rapid progress in their personal development. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- All additional funding is used judiciously, including the primary sports funding, catch-up funding and special educational needs funding. The new multi-use games area enables pupils to keep physically healthy and to compete with other schools. The pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to support the learning needs of all disadvantaged pupils. Pupils access after-school and holiday clubs, receive speech and language support, and engage in creative activities, as well as yoga and swimming. There are minimal differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. In fact, disadvantaged pupils often out-perform their peers, making very strong progress.
- Prior to this inspection, Ofsted received a one-off complaint about the school. Inspectors did not investigate this complaint. However, the evidence gathered at the time of this inspection confirmed that leaders dealt effectively with the issue.

Governance of the school

- Governance has been strengthened since the last inspection. Indeed, directors acknowledged that the previous inspection's outcomes were 'a wakeup call'. They say it galvanised them into action, including a full review of their roles and responsibilities. There are now clear lines of accountability, with a newly formed advisory council.
- Directors are better informed about all aspects of the school's performance. To gain greater insight, they too have undertaken the same training as staff. Directors monitor closely the impact of leaders' work. They carry out their own observations and receive regular and detailed reports on all aspects of leaders' work, including how well staff are managing pupils' behaviour. Directors are now able to hold leaders fully to account in promoting high-quality teaching and learning, as well as pupils' welfare and personal development. They share senior leaders' vision of securing and maintaining an ambitious culture of excellence for all pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Leaders, including directors, acted decisively, as a result of safeguarding being judged ineffective, at the time of the last inspection.
- The use of secure rooms to deal with challenging behaviours ceased immediately, after the last inspection.
- Leaders instigated an external review by local authority safeguarding officers and implemented all the subsequent recommendations without delay. Directors also completed their own independent review, including the use of secure rooms. They ensured that the learning environment was suitably adapted to meet the needs of pupils, including those pupils who find learning stressful in class. A significant amount of funding has been used to create calm areas accessible for pupils to withdraw to when anxious. The school grounds are now secure, keeping pupils safe outside.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority by staff and directors. There are robust procedures in place to make sure pupils are kept safe. Regular and up-to-date training for the designated safeguarding lead, deputies, staff and directors ensures high levels of vigilance to spot any potential concerns. Internal and subsequent referrals to external agencies are timely and followed up tenaciously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers and support staff use their expertise in special educational needs extremely well to make sure each pupil's needs and abilities are met precisely.
- Staff both support and encourage pupils to achieve their best. They focus on what pupils can do and make sure learning proceeds in small sequential steps. As a result, work is constantly adapted to secure a brisk pace, simultaneously developing pupils' concentration and confidence.
- Staff question pupils very effectively, to revisit and clarify key aspects of learning and to deepen pupils' thinking.
- Ongoing assessments are used well to plan pupils' next steps. They also provide information on what additional or intensive support is required to boost the progress of those pupils in danger of not meeting their challenging targets.
- Those pupils who find learning easier than other pupils are set challenging tasks to advance their achievement still further.
- Teachers seize every opportunity to develop and extend pupils' literacy skills. They use a range of successful techniques to constantly encourage pupils to communicate their feelings and ideas.
- Teachers provide excellent opportunities to older and most-able pupils to promote their reading skills in all subjects. For example, pupils read out aloud clearly in class what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Younger pupils enjoy listening to stories. Their attention is captured through high levels of interaction and sensory experiences.
- Staff implement the revised behaviour policy consistently well. They constantly regulate pupils' emotions and responses, reinforcing positive behaviours, through timely praise, and redirecting pupils' attention when required. Staff are skilled in de-escalating

potential emotional outbursts. For most of the time, pupils demonstrate positive learning attitudes, and focus on their work. When pupils occasionally become agitated, they are encouraged to use a calm space, where they can relax, on their own, being closely monitored or with a member of staff. This helps to maintain pupils' dignity, as well as keeping them and other pupils safe.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders and staff make sure that pupils' emotional well-being is their priority. Strong relationships, where adults reinforce clear social boundaries for pupils, mean there are few disruptions to learning.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. Appropriate communication and how to respond to others are taught constantly and through all activities. As a result, pupils usually show respect for themselves and others. They grow in confidence which in turn develops their sense of responsibility, as well as developing their independence.
- The school council and a representative on the advisory council enable them to be involved in discussing and making recommendations for change in all three settings, including at school, college and the trust hospitals.
- Pupils are taught as and when appropriate how to keep safe, including when using the internet. Parents are also supported to help their children stay safe when using electronic devices at home.
- Bullying is rare, as pupils reported, 'It happens once in a blue moon.' Pupils feel safe and say that staff are the key to keeping them safe. They also told inspectors that they appreciate how the new fences help to keep them safe and secure.
- The school's pastoral care to promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being is excellent. The mental health working group, therapists and family liaison officers, as well as a wide variety of enrichment activities such as yoga and links with external professionals, make a strong contribution to pupils' welfare. There is timely support and guidance for families.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the school's work. They told inspectors that the school has helped their children to manage their anxieties, and to cope better with change. All parents who spoke to inspectors said that their children have 'come on in leaps and bounds'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Leaders have built on existing effective practice and made sure that there is consistency in the management of behaviour across all three schools.
- Staff confirmed to inspectors that there is now clearer guidance on how to deal with

challenging behaviour, and that weekly meetings to share concerns have vastly improved communication. Equally, staff appreciate the excellent support they receive from the coaches who are on call at all times.

- As a result, pupils behave extremely well. Those pupils who sometimes display challenging behaviours make excellent progress. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-discipline, and to take control of their emotions and behaviour. As a result, the number of incidents and physical interventions has declined significantly.
- Older pupils who are socially able develop greater independence, and study courses in mainstream schools.
- Pupils' attendance is tracked carefully. Pupils attend regularly, which reflects their enjoyment of school. There are very few pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Leaders' drive and determination to secure improvements in all aspects of the school's performance are clear to see in the upward trend in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' starting points vary significantly, with all having a wide range of different and complex needs.
- The school's information shows that all groups of pupils make substantial and sustained progress across all subjects, including in their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. All groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged, those from different ethnic backgrounds and the most able, make substantial and sustained progress.
- Inspection evidence confirms the accuracy of the school's achievement information.
- There are no variations in rates of progress across all three schools, because there is a universal expectation by leaders that all pupils will achieve their full potential. This vision is shared by all staff. Indeed, outstanding teaching is the norm, securing outstanding rates of progress.
- Meticulous assessments ensure that teachers and support staff have precise understanding of individual pupils' needs and abilities. These, together with a personalised curriculum, ensure that pupils are very engaged in their learning and make excellent progress.
- Those pupils who are able academically, and socially resilient, study a range of GCSEs in a mainstream school. As a result, the most able older pupils achieve well in a range of accredited courses.
- Strong and supportive relationships between pupils and adults, as well as the small or one-to-one learning groups, have a significant impact on pupils' progress. Pupils flourish and achieve well in a calm and purposeful atmosphere.
- Older pupils develop key life skills in a variety of contexts within school, for example, helping the site manager and supporting younger pupils on school trips. This promotes their self-esteem, confidence and sense of independence.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment, with almost all going on to sixth-form study.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years leader is an outstanding practitioner with an in-depth understanding of what constitutes effective practice. She constantly reflects on both her own and colleagues' practice, and continually strives for the very best for the children.
- The early years leader knows the strengths of the early years team. She identifies precisely what support staff may need to boost their capabilities in order to maximise children's learning experiences and promote their well-being. All staff share a deep understanding of individual children's developmental needs and capabilities.
- As a result of excellent teaching, children make exceptionally strong progress, particularly in their physical, personal and social development, and communication and language skills. As a result, they are well-prepared for Year 1.
- Ongoing accurate assessments are used to tailor activities to meet the individual, diverse and often complex needs of each child. These activities are stimulating, and build carefully on what children already know and can do.
- Staff are skilled in observing children in their learning, and knowing when to intervene to extend their learning. They also know when to stand back so that children begin to develop some degree of independence. Children are encouraged to cooperate, to become more self-aware and mindful of others.
- The learning areas, both indoor and outdoor, are well resourced and provide a breadth of activities to cover all areas of learning. Adults are attuned to children's responses to their learning. They quickly adapt activities to sustain their attention.
- On a regular basis, staff rigorously check their assessments of each child, across both early years departments, to secure accuracy. Assessments are also moderated with other schools, mainstream and special, and by the local authority. This ensures that the information on children's progress is accurate.
- Staff foster excellent partnerships with parents and other specialists, including occupational, speech and language therapists. As a result, children and their parents are fully supported, securing high levels of satisfaction.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. The leader is a highly knowledgeable and effective practitioner. He is totally committed to making sure that students are successful in their learning, so that they are able to go on to lead worthwhile lives.
- The sixth-form leader has ensured that students behave extremely well and make outstanding progress in their academic studies and personal development. This is the case in all three settings, at school, college and the different hospitals. Students are very well prepared for their next stage in education, employment or training.
- Assessment and careful guidance ensure that specific pathways of learning are tailored to the individual needs, interests and aspirations of each student. Leaders tap into the expertise and offers of local colleges, as well as making sure students achieve qualifications that employers value. As a result, students this year are following work-

related courses, as well as accredited courses in life skills and independence.

- The most able students study a wide range of options, community projects and internships. Project Search enables students to have work placements in local hospitals. The sixth-form leader describes this learning as 'total immersion' as students undertake valuable work experience from catering and healthcare, to laboratory technicians. From 2013 to 2017, 12 students have gone on to gain paid employment.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted strongly. For example, students are encouraged to study a range of different artists. This gives them the opportunity to reflect on their work, so that they are inspired to produce high-quality art work.
- All sixth-form courses emphasise students' communication and interaction skills. This ensures that students are able to interact positively in school and within the local community. As a result, students develop key life skills such as preparing nutritious meals that help to equip them for adult life. Mini-enterprise projects enable students to practise their mathematical, entrepreneurial, social and independent skills.
- Leaders have forged strong partnerships within the local community. This provides students with numerous opportunities to develop self-awareness, cooperation, respect and confidence. For example, students work with an organic food producer, while simultaneously practising and applying their horticultural skills in the school's garden.
- Students are taught to identify and manage potential risks. For example, they have personalised online programmes to help them stay safe when using the internet.
- Students and their parents are provided with clear information, careers advice and guidance to enable them to make informed decisions on the destination they choose when students leave school. In 2016/17, 13 students went on to employment, training or college, with other students going on to social care provision.

School details

Unique reference number	140795
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10041336

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	54
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Caroline Sheppard
Principal	Laura Pease
Telephone number	020 8531 3426
Website	www.whitefield.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@whitefield.waltham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2017

Information about this school

- Whitefield Schools caters for pupils who have severe or complex special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and comprises three schools:
 - Margaret Brearley School for pupils aged three to 19 who have complex needs, including learning difficulties, physical impairment, sensory impairment and medical needs
 - Peter Turner Primary School for pupils aged three to 11 who have communication and interaction difficulties, including autism
 - Niels Chapman Secondary School for pupils aged 11 to 19 who have

communication and interaction difficulties, including autism.

- The school also delivers some parts of its 16 to 19 programme at Waltham Forest FE College and hospitals, which are part of the Barts Health NHS Trust.
- Since September 2017, the Waltham Forest FE College programme is shared with Joseph Clarke, a school for children who have visual impairment and complex needs, which is part of the Whitefield Academy Trust.
- The trust offers an outreach service and a research and development centre to other providers.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. A small proportion of pupils are children looked after.
- One in two pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is well above the national average.
- Almost one in two pupils are from 15 of the 17 minority ethnic groups, the largest pupil groups are Black African, Pakistani and Black Caribbean. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well above the national average.
- The school does not make use of any other alternative provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- During this inspection, inspectors were aware that an allegation of a child protection nature was being investigated by the appropriate authorities. Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this nature. However, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Information about this inspection

- When Whitefield Schools was inspected in January 2017, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school was inspected on one occasion.
- At this monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action. As a result, inspectors deemed the section 8 monitoring inspection to be a section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. The majority of observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, and a range of staff, including teachers, support staff and therapists. Inspectors met with the school council, spoke to parents informally at the beginning and end of the school day, and met with a group of parents. Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and the chair of the academy trust, accompanied by two other directors.
- Two telephone conversations were held with the divisional director and director for learning from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 33 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and examined the school’s staff and pupil surveys.
- A range of documents were looked at including the school’s information about pupils’ achievement, minutes of governing body meetings and records concerning pupils’ attendance, behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Sarah Murphy-Dutton	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Diane Rochford	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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