

# Joseph Clarke School

Vincent Road, London E4 9PP

## Inspection dates

21–22 February 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have high aspirations for this good school. The newly appointed leadership team has secured high expectations of pupils.
- Input from the academy trust has strengthened the school's leadership, quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Pupils' needs are accurately matched to curriculum pathways that support their learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Good links exist with external agencies to protect pupils.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good across all key stages. Teaching assistants make strong contributions to pupils' learning and outcomes.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good and well supported by the school's caring ethos.
- Pupils behave well. They are friendly, respectful towards adults and get on very well with each other.
- Pupils, including those with sight loss or sight problems, make good progress from their starting points, in all subjects, including English, mathematics and science. All pupils enjoy reading.
- The early years provision is good. Children make good progress from their low starting points. At the end of the Reception Year children engage in a range of activities that prepare them for Year 1.
- The quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes offered to students is good. Effective partnerships with local schools provide sixth-form students with opportunities to access their chosen courses, and they achieve well.
- Newly appointed middle leaders have made a promising start. Middle leaders, including those new in post, do not consistently monitor the quality of teaching and pupil progress to bring about substantial outcomes for all pupils.
- Teachers use effective planning to help pupils to learn well. Resources are not consistently matched to pupils' needs to promote outstanding learning for pupils.
- Pupils are proud of their school and most attend regularly. Despite the school's efforts, a small proportion of pupils continue to be persistently absent and attendance rates are consistently low.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment from good to outstanding by coordinating resources to enhance practical learning and further develop pupils' independence.
- Ensure the attendance rates of pupils and those who are persistently absent improve, to be in line with the national average.
- Strengthen leadership and management by increasing the effectiveness and the impact of middle leaders in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress across all key stages, including for those who attend other schools.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The committed headteacher, supported well by newly appointed senior leaders, provides stability and good leadership. They have quickly established a culture of high expectation of what the pupils can achieve. Along with governors, leaders have enabled the school to emerge from a period of challenges and staffing issues.
- Leaders and managers have a strong sense of ambition for all pupils that is underpinned by a very caring ethos. Staff share leaders' vision for all pupils to be supported to reach their full potential.
- Senior leaders are committed to continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers' performance is linked closely to the school's priorities for development. Targets set for teachers are challenging and any underperformance is used to prioritise further training for staff.
- School leaders receive support from governors and directors representing the Whitefield Academy Trust. Working collaboratively with the other school in the trust, staff have opportunities for professional development. Additionally, leaders are able to check that the system to track pupils' progress is accurate through the sharing of best practice.
- Further external support provided to the school is effective. The Teaching School, Outreach Team, an external consultant and partnerships with other schools make positive contributions to teaching and staff development. Consequently, pupils benefit from rich experiences that boost their learning.
- The local authority is working effectively with the school and provides support to bring about improvements.
- The broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to acquire basic skills in numeracy and literacy, including reading. The use of Braille allows pupils to access and achieve in a wide range of subjects, including the development of their phonic skills. Pupils follow a learning pathway tailored to their distinct needs, ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences exceptionally well through a rich curriculum. For instance, key stage 4 pupils were involved in a work experience project that developed their travel competency skills and awareness of the world of work, including answering the telephone confidently.
- The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Diversity and equality, and including pupils with protected characteristics, are central features of all aspects of the school. Pupils learn British values of tolerance and respect through a range of activities, including weekly assemblies, expressive arts and community visits.
- The primary school sport funding is used effectively to promote pupils' physical activity and fitness. For instance, pupils are developing horse-riding skills and going for walks in the countryside.
- Pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to support the achievements of eligible pupils, enabling them to take part in activities that they might not otherwise experience.

- Year 7 catch-up funding is used wisely. Leaders ensure that targeted pupils are able to boost their learning of English and mathematics while at school and at home.
- Recently appointed middle leaders have quickly understood the strengths and weaknesses of their subject areas. They are keen to enrich the curriculum with stimulating equipment and resources to enhance pupils' learning. One example is the introduction of a new reading scheme to support the use of Braille. The monitoring of teaching by middle leaders is not embedded in their subject areas in order to improve pupils' progress rapidly.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors, members and directors of the academy trust are making strong contributions to the success of the school. Their clearly defined roles have been the driving force for improvement. The board of directors have ultimate control over the school and effectively set its strategic direction. The governing body bring a wide range of expertise, are highly supportive and hold leaders effectively to account for the quality of all aspects of the school's performance.
- The governors and leaders of the academy trust aspire for the provision to be a national centre of educational excellence for pupils who have sight problems or sight loss. Pupils and students are at the heart of all that they do because the governing body is committed to the school's mission: 'Enjoyment, achievement and well-being for all'.
- Governors monitor spending priorities to ensure value for money. Additional funding received, including that to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is constantly reviewed and evaluated to ensure all pupils benefit.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is underpinned by the idea that 'it is better to be wrong than not to have acted.' All staff are expected to do everything they can to protect the children and young people from harm and to make the learning environment safe. Pupils say that they feel safe because there are always adults around to talk to, if they have any concerns.
- Leaders, including governors, maintain robust systems to ensure that staff, including volunteers, are suitable to work with children. Staff and governors receive appropriate and regular training to ensure they are kept up to date about child protection issues. Training covers how to identify and report signs of a child at risk, including from radicalisation and extremism.
- Close links with parents, the local authority and external agencies help to make sure safeguarding matters are dealt with quickly and effectively. Written records of referrals to other agencies are carefully maintained to monitor the help that pupils receive.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching is good across all subjects. Leaders, therapists and teachers accurately assess what pupils can do, alongside their specific needs, to plan high-quality lessons. Learning activities capture pupils' interest and keep them engaged.
- Teachers are committed to deepening pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They use skilful questioning to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. Tasks and explanations are adapted to address any misconceptions and help pupils consolidate their learning.
- Teaching assistants are a core strength of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils are supported, enabling them to overcome potential barriers to their learning. Pupils are curious and excited to talk about their learning.
- Teaching provides pupils who have sight problems or sight loss with alternative ways to use their other senses, to enable them to learn well. Music is used creatively in multi-sensory activities and supports pupils' communication and interaction skills. For instance, inspectors saw pupils playing the bongo drums as a means to greet each other.
- A large majority of pupils are becoming proficient in using Braille, and this supports their learning and development of numeracy and literacy. Learning materials, including tactile and sensory resources, are not always coordinated well to develop pupils' skills and help further their own learning.
- Teachers use the pupils' curriculum targets to plan learning over time. In some key stages, the impact of the planned resources on pupils' understanding is not checked systematically to ensure that pupils, including the most able, make rapid progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders and staff give the utmost priority to pupils' well-being. As a result, the promotion of life skills and safety are key aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' personal achievements are celebrated.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured about their learning. They are presented with opportunities to build their self-esteem through varied experiences, such as creating sculptures out of clay and attending work placements. Pupils take pride in their learning and spoke to inspectors about their achievements with confidence.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' physical and emotional needs are catered for. Some pupils use Braille in order to support their learning needs, particularly to boost their reading skills. Pupils who require mobility training receive it, for instance to develop their swimming skills. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed going on trips and various activities such as swimming.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and trust adults will deal with any issues, should they arise. They are aware of various forms of bullying, which they say is very rare and the school's information confirms this view. Pupils know how to keep safe as this is

embedded in their learning. They know about road safety and e-safety, and scrutiny of pupils' books showed pupils learning about 'How do police officers help you?'

- Students are escorted to and from their classes at other schools to ensure that they are kept safe. Reports received from those schools state that sixth form students make good gains in their personal development and welfare.
- The daily breakfast club is managed well. It has a positive impact on learning by ensuring that pupils are alert and nourished at the start of the school day. The after-school club takes place once a week and did not fall on the day of the inspection so the inspectors are unable to report on this activity.
- A particular strength of the school is its partnership with a range of external providers to support pupils' personal development and welfare. The school works closely with a wide range of professionals, therapists and agencies to ensure pupils are kept safe. Positive engagement with parents, for instance a 'Healthy Minds Workshop', helps parents support their children.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Relationships are very positive and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning in lessons and the calm, friendly atmosphere around the school. During the inspection, although building works were taking place, the school's environment was clean and conducive to learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around school. School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are unusual. Occasionally, younger children cause unrest due to their complex needs but adults quickly defuse the situation with minimal interference to learning.
- Attendance is consistently below the national average. For some pupils, attendance levels are affected by severe and complex medical needs. Pupils receive termly certificates for improved attendance and the school works closely with families to encourage and support pupils to be at school more regularly. Despite this, a small group of pupils are persistently absent or do not attend school regularly and hence fall behind in their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Current pupils' outcomes are good and improving. Pupils make good progress from their starting points across a wide range of subjects including English, mathematics and science. Pupils in key stage 1 and students in the sixth form make slightly more progress than pupils in other key stages, across a range of subjects.
- Targeted support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is having a good effect. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points across a wide range of subjects, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Scrutiny of their work showed good and sometimes better progress in a number of subjects, including in French and history. Information from the school confirmed this.

- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Leaders use information on pupil progress effectively to support easy transition between each of the key stages. Effective partnerships with other schools ensure that students can choose courses that enthuse them, to help them prepare for their future career plans. Consequently, they make good progress and acquire key life skills in preparation for adulthood.
- Pupils have the opportunity to gain skills and qualifications to assist their future career and education choices. Pupils and students have achieved a range of accreditations, such as certifications in food safety and hygiene, sports leader's awards, entry-level qualifications in English and mathematics, and BTEC national diplomas in art and childcare. Pupils are continuing to study for a range of BTEC national diplomas, including in catering, office skills, travel and tourism. Pupils' achievements in GCSEs including in mathematics, English, science and electronics have enabled access to study for A levels.
- The school's published data about outcomes at the end of the key stages is variable or unavailable because of small cohort sizes. Inspection evidence gathered through scrutiny of pupils' work, looking at the school's assessment information and visits to lessons, showed that pupils make good progress over time from their varied starting points.
- Pupils' outcomes for reading are strong. The development of phonics used alongside Braille allows pupils to practise their reading skills across a number of subjects. Pupils, including the most able, enjoy their reading.
- Leaders meticulously assign learning pathways to each pupil based on their individual needs. Pupils' progress is robustly tracked, allowing leaders to administer extra support should a pupil fall behind or need more challenge. Some pupils, including the most able, fail to make outstanding progress because they are not always encouraged to explore a range of resources to nurture their independence.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Effective temporary leadership, supported by senior school leaders, has ensured that all aspects of the provision, including the environment, are good. Children are looked after, happy and enjoy their learning.
- Children start Nursery with skills that are below expectations. Well-planned activities have increased children's progress in all aspects of learning. As a result, the majority of children are prepared well for key stage 1 by the end of the Reception Year.
- Teaching is good in the early years provision. Staff regularly check children's learning and use this information to plan next steps for each child. Children have opportunities to engage with activities that enthuse their learning. A display shows children exploring objects by banging them together and using pre-Braille skills to start their learning of phonics.
- Children behave well in the early years because good routines are in place. Soon after entering the early years provision, children grow in confidence, as they are well cared for. Children develop positive attitudes to their learning and concentrate well as they are inspired to learn.

- Staff work closely with parents, therapists and external services. Children receive high-quality support, because of the shared understanding of children's needs. An increasing number of parents communicate regularly with teachers using the 'home school book'. Children's learning journals show that children are accessing all areas of the curriculum and making good progress across most of the early learning goals.
- The school makes effective use of additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged children are making good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective and statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Teaching resources do not always extend the imaginative experiences of the younger children. Learning materials are not responsive to children's physical needs in order to promote high levels of progress.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- The quality of provision for students aged 16 to 19 is effective. Students benefit from a highly personalised learning programme that supports good outcomes, personal development and welfare.
- Leaders have high ambitions for the future employment of their students. Students have access to impartial careers advice that prepares them suitably for the world of work. Students have access to valuable work-related and volunteer opportunities that support their prospects. Consequently, a few pupils have secured employment in their desired career.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. A well-planned curriculum enables students to develop communication and numeracy skills that are suited to their needs. Students achieve accredited qualifications in various subjects including English and mathematics.
- Leaders ensure that a greater range of academic and vocational courses are available for students through partnerships with neighbouring schools. Students study for various qualifications, including entry-level qualifications, BTEC national diplomas, A-level and GCSE examinations. Students take courses that interest them, so most complete their course of study and achieve well. The majority of students have successfully secured college places or employment.
- Students develop their independence and acquire appropriate life skills. Students have access to valuable training to ensure they improve their mobility. School records show that this has proved successful for many students, including those gaining employment.
- Leaders do not ensure that they receive information about students' progress on a regular basis from students who attend classes at two other schools.

## School details

Unique reference number	140197
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10026734

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	15
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Owen O'Regan
Headteacher	Isobel Cox
Telephone number	020 8523 4833
Website	<a href="http://www.whitefield.org.uk">www.whitefield.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:school@josephclarke.waltham.sch.uk">school@josephclarke.waltham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- 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.
- Joseph Clarke School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2014. When Ofsted last inspected its predecessor school, also known as Joseph Clarke School, in April 2013, it was judged to be good.

- The school is a member of a multi-academy trust, Whitefield Academy Trust. The school has no provision for two-year-olds.
- The current headteacher, who is the third since the school converted to an academy, took up her post in June 2016.
- This is a smaller than average special school. There are presently 95 pupils on roll, six children in the early years foundation stage and 15 students in the 16 to 19 study programme.
- The school provides for pupils with sight loss or sight problems. Some pupils have additional needs including moderate and severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum conditions, physical disability and dual sensory needs. All children, pupils and students have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional pupil premium funding is above average.
- Classes are held at the neighbouring Highams Park Academy and Hornbeam Academy, the William Morris site. Some students have placements at Project Search run by the Whitefield Academy Trust at Whipps Cross Hospital.
- The school does not place children, pupils or students in alternative provisions.
- The school operates a breakfast club each day and an after-school club for one day of the week.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight part-lessons across all key stages. Of these observations, seven were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. The lead inspector also met with three governors and the chief executive officer.
- Discussions were held with a speech and language therapist and parents, and a telephone conversation was held with the chief executive officer at Hornbeam Academy.
- Inspectors met groups of pupils, spoke to others informally and examined their books in a wide range of subjects. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's own self-evaluation. Records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents to hear their views of the school. There were four responses to Ofsted's free text service. Too few responses were made to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to be reported on directly.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey and the findings from a recent pupil survey conducted by the school.

## Inspection team

Rosemarie McCarthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Geddes	Ofsted Inspector

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