

College Park School

Garway Road, London, W2 4PH

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Imaginative and considered leadership by the executive headteacher, supported by senior and middle leaders, has created a clear vision for the future of the school, and improved learning and achievement.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils' progress is accelerating. Progress is faster in English than mathematics, due to the focus on improving pupils' literacy.
- The governors provide a good level of challenge and support to leaders. They ensure that government funding is well spent for the benefit of all groups of pupils.
- Children make a good start in the Reception class and progress well.
- The sixth form is good. It ensures pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average, and exclusions have reduced dramatically.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe, are eager to learn and engage well in lessons.
- The welfare of children is at the heart of everything the school does. Staff have very positive relationships with pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all staff and governors make enough use of the information about pupils' progress to ensure they achieve the very best they can.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their study skills to learn on their own and to take part in practical activities.
- Teachers' feedback does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to respond to searching questions and communicate their understanding as fully as possible.
- Teachers' planning does not always show clearly what pupils are going to learn and how their progress will be measured.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons, of which 14 were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Informal discussions were held with groups of learners from each key stage, and included hearing pupils read.
- There were no submissions to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents and carers. Returns from 20 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and the Safeguarding Lead of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, the executive headteacher, the interim head of school and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, monitoring reports, performance management records, policies on child protection and special educational needs, case studies, pupil premium records, the sport premium action plan, attendance records, governor reports, safeguarding information, school displays and records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- College Park School is a special school for children and young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties; a high proportion of pupils have complex needs and/or a diagnosis of autism.
- Pupils are generally admitted from nurseries and maintained schools from across Westminster. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Just over four fifths of pupils are from ethnic minority heritages, well above average, as is the proportion of the pupils who speak English as an additional language, although none is at the early stages of learning English. The large majority of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) is above average. None of the pupils in the school is from service families or is looked after by the local authority.
- All Year 7 pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- Just over 25% of pupils across the school are involved with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as a result of their behavioural needs.
- The provision works in partnership with many different bodies and organisations, including the local authorities of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster.
- College Park School is federated with Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School, and shares a single governing body and executive headteacher.
- From September 2013 the federation, in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College, will provide up to 30 places for post-16 students wishing to study theatre skills, hospitality and catering, and reprographics.
- The school mainly offers the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) externally accredited courses and does not enter pupils early for other examinations.
- The school was recently awarded the Arts Mark Gold and the Inclusion Mark.
- During the past few months there have been a number of changes in staffing and as a result, there are currently several senior posts vacant.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress by:
 - enabling pupils to become more active learners through encouraging them to work on their own and allowing them time for thinking and discussion
 - providing small-step feedback so that each pupil knows precisely how to improve
 - giving pupils more opportunities to answer searching questions and achieve higher levels of progress, particularly the most able.
- Strengthen further the impact of leadership at all levels, including governors, by:
 - ensuring that information on pupils' progress in lessons is recorded regularly and analysed rigorously so that challenge and support can be quickly given where they are needed
 - ensuring that teachers' planning states clearly what pupils are going to learn and how their progress will be measured.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress by the end of Year 11 is beginning to accelerate. There has been a rising trend over the past two years. Progress in English is faster than in mathematics. This has been as a result of a strong focus on improving reading and writing. Achievement is not yet outstanding because not all pupils, particularly the most able, make the progress they are capable of.
- Pupils enter the school with levels of skill that are significantly below those expected for their age, particularly their communication and social skills, due to the nature of their complex and severe learning needs.
- In Reception, children make good progress. They settle-in quickly and learn the routines of the day. They know how to communicate their needs and choices by using signs and symbols. They make good progress in their communication skills by socialising and working with other children.
- At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, the majority of pupils are making good progress with their reading and writing skills. Pupils who are ready to do so are developing their ability to recognise letters and the sounds they make. However, not all the most able pupils are making the progress they are capable of in developing their reading fluency and understanding.
- Pupils who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium have made similar progress to other pupils in the school. Learners with autistic spectrum disorders have made better progress from very low starting points compared with other pupils, and the school ensures that the gap is narrowed. As a result, the attainment of both groups of eligible pupils in the school has risen to almost match that of their peers in English and mathematics.
- There are no differences in the progress of different groups, including those of different ethnic backgrounds, those with moderate and severe learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Since the last inspection, the number of courses has increased. All pupils follow pathways appropriate to their learning needs, and in Year 11 are able to achieve accreditation in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, food preparation, gardening, sport and leisure.
- The majority of pupils stay on into the sixth form and achieve well in their basic skills and vocational courses such as theatre skills, hospitality and catering, and reprographics together with independence and life-skills. No one leaves without work experience or some form of accredited qualification, or placement at college. Excellent links, for example, with local colleges and employers, support training and work experience very well.
- Phonics teaching (the ability to say the letter sounds correctly) helps younger pupils to pronounce new and difficult words because time is devoted to developing their reading skills. The screening check for Year 1 pupils suggests they are taught well. A reading programme organised throughout the school gives pupils the opportunity to read in class monitored and supported by adults. Parents and carers are encouraged to listen to their child read regularly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection due to the increasing rigour of monitoring and the strong focus on training. Consequently, over time teaching is good. It is not yet outstanding because staff do not always use enough practical activities to exploit opportunities for pupils to work by themselves and apply what they have learned previously. Also, when tasks are dominated by teacher-led activities and the teacher talks for too long, pupils have few opportunities to discuss their ideas and progress slows and interest wanes.

- In better lessons, teachers' activities are well matched to pupils' needs. This was well demonstrated in a post-16 lesson, where pupils were thoroughly engaged in running the café and in preparing and serving snacks and drinks. Here the 'real-life' practical activity was well matched to learners' needs and enthusiasms with the teacher and other adults ensuring pupils had a variety of opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills with customers.
 - Teachers use question and answer sessions well to check pupils' progress in grasping new skills, knowledge and understanding. However, this practice is not consistently applied across the school and as a result, the communication and understanding skills of the most able pupils are not stretched.
 - Teaching assistants provide high levels of individual tuition and support where necessary to make sure each pupil learns confidently and is enabled to practise their speaking, reading and writing at suitable levels. Other professionals, such as speech and music therapists, play a key part, working in partnership with teachers to assess pupils and to devise challenging targets for them. Staff expertise in techniques to provide for pupils with autism enables them effectively to support their communication and behavioural needs.
 - The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is woven into their daily lives. There are many opportunities for pupils to speak about their learning, listen carefully to each other and reflect on the lives of people who are from different cultures and have different beliefs.
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The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are friendly and polite to adults and each other and behave well in lessons because they are generally interested in what they are learning. At break times, they are well supervised and they respond well to adults. Lunch is a social occasion that is enjoyed by all pupils.
- The school has an effective behaviour policy which is consistently and fairly applied throughout the school. High staffing levels help relationships between adults and pupils to be warm, supportive and based on mutual liking and respect. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils do not yet have the necessary skills to work on their own and are sometimes over reliant on adult supervision in their learning.
- The very few pupils who find it hard to behave are well supported. For example, systems are well established to deal with isolated incidents of challenging behaviour in lessons without disrupting the learning of others.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with very swiftly and effectively. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and extreme behaviour such as racism. They feel comfortable about confiding in adults when things go wrong and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. In a recent survey, parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and are safe and well-cared for.
- Attendance is above the average for special schools. Pupils enjoy school; they are punctual to lessons and come into school each day with smiles and friendly greetings for staff and other pupils.
- Exclusions have been reduced over the past two years from 25 days to three, due to a zero-tolerance strategy, initiated by the current leadership of the school.

The leadership and management are good

The clarity of vision of the executive headteacher together with her calm presence and determination to make the school a success is the driving force behind its improvement. She has high expectations and has worked tirelessly to instil a 'can-do' ethos. Despite a period of uncertainty, the school has overcome a number of staffing difficulties and morale is buoyant. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because leaders have not ensured that teachers' planning clearly states what pupils are going to learn and how their progress will be measured. Also, not all staff and governors are confident in recording and analysing information on pupils' progress, to check to see if all learners have achieved as well as they can.

- The executive headteacher has developed an increasingly effective group of senior and middle leaders who have worked together very successfully to rapidly reduce past inadequacies in teaching, increase the range of subjects, improve attendance and raise the standard of pupils' achievement. Consequently, the school demonstrates a strong capacity to continue on its improvement journey.
- In April 2013, the school received a complaint regarding its safeguarding arrangements. Immediately, the local authority acted decisively by bringing forward a planned review of the school and safeguarding and with the executive headteacher, worked together to resolve the issues raised. As a result of robust monitoring, and the procurement of additional funds, the school was able to swiftly address the weaknesses identified so that in May 2013, HMI judged safeguarding arrangements to meet requirements. Support from the local authority has reduced and is now 'light-touch' to reflect the growing ability of the school to operate without external help.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are

securely in place, meet statutory requirements and are rigorously applied. They have also put in place rigorous procedures and protocols to monitor child protection arrangements regularly and robustly, following HMI's visit in May. Leaders effectively promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school and are proactive in tackling all forms of discrimination.

- The school works well with parents and carers and the local community. A particular strength is the effective way in which parents and carers who do not easily engage with the school have been encouraged to become more interested in their children's education. For example, strategies to keep them regularly informed through texting, phone calls, meetings and home visits have made a positive contribution to show parents and carers how they can help and support their child's learning.
- A positive feature of the school is the links with schools throughout the 'triborough partnership' and external agencies, which make an increasingly positive contribution to pupils' progress and well-being.
- As a result of increasingly robust arrangements for managing teachers' performance, only those teachers who meet the required standards, as judged by the executive headteacher, are able to move up the salary scale. Senior leaders have not shied away from holding difficult conversations with teachers about the quality of their teaching or the consequences of continued poor performance.
- As a result, of the federation's training and outreach programme there is a highly skilled and enthusiastic workforce. Training provision is firmly rooted in research and as a result, teachers are in demand to advise and train other teachers within the local authority and beyond, both in mainstream and special settings. Also, courses have also been designed to help parents and carers who have a child with autism to gain a better understanding of the condition and provide practical tips and advice in the most appropriate ways to educate their son or daughter.
- Senior leaders use their funding purposefully, ensuring that the sport premium is used to improve physical education and that the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is used effectively to support pupils who need additional help, such as speech and language therapy.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors use resources effectively and increasingly challenge the school well. They provide support for the executive headteacher, who ensures that the performance and salary progression of staff are monitored effectively. They have taken decisive and robust action when interventions are necessary. They receive reports from the executive headteacher and the local authority and are increasingly confident in asking questions so that they fully understand the issues, particularly when they receive better information on pupils' progress and how it compares with similar settings. They visit the school regularly, are attached to classes and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Committee members direct appropriate funds for learners attracting the sport, Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding to make sure that individual learners are supported and helped in lessons. However, they have not yet analysed fully the impact of these activities on pupils' outcomes. Full regard is given to the well-being and safety of pupils, who are very vulnerable at this time of their lives; governors have undergone safeguarding and safer recruitment training, and the Chair of the Governing Body has recently attended a course about conducting headteachers' performance management. In addition, training is planned for all governors to increase their understanding of the different types of information used to calculate pupils' progress in special schools.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101182
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	427437

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Simson
Headteacher	Olivia Meyrick
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2011
Telephone number	020 7221 3454
Fax number	020 3220 0359
Email address	admin@qe2cp.westminster.sch.uk

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