

Wetherby Senior School

100 Marylebone Lane, London W1U 2QU

Inspection dates

20–22 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have worked with determination and remarkable speed to establish this new school. They are resolute in their determination to ensure the highest quality of provision for the pupils. The classrooms, laboratories and other specialist facilities in this newly refurbished building are exceptionally well finished and resourced.
- Leaders have prioritised the establishment of high-quality teaching and have focused on ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils. They have empowered subject leaders to take responsibility for the development of the resources, the curriculum and teaching in their areas.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to plan lessons that both interest and meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points in the school.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils is good. British values are promoted across all aspects of school life, and the diversity of the school is used well to promote tolerance and respect for each other.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils display exceptionally positive attitudes to their learning. They relish the challenge teachers bring to their learning. They value highly the support they receive, setting high expectations of themselves both for their progress and behaviour.
- The well-designed, engaging and broad curriculum contributes well to all pupils' academic and personal development. There is considerable focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across curriculum subjects. A good range of enrichment activities are already in place, many of which relate to sport.
- Welfare, health and safety arrangements are good. Leaders have established secure systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, the learning outcomes of individuals, and pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The proprietors and leaders have a clear vision for the steady growth of the school over time. They have ensured that this new school meets all the independent school standards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's systems for monitoring assessment information and pupils' welfare, health and safety do not enable leaders to fully check their impact and identify when further actions are needed.
- Pupils do not gain enough knowledge and first-hand experiences of the locality and its community. There are too few opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards)

Regulations 2014 (‘the independent school standards’) and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the personal development of pupils, by:
 - implementing and monitoring the planned programme to develop pupils' knowledge and first-hand experiences of the locality and its community
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - developing the school's monitoring systems of pupils' academic achievement in order to have a clearer picture of the performance of different groups, including that of pupils who have special educational needs
 - bringing rigour to the monitoring and checking of the school's systems for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety to enable leaders to assess their effectiveness and precisely identify any concerns.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The proprietor and headteacher of the school both have high ambitions for this new school. They have made remarkable progress in establishing the school in a short space of time. Pupils, parents and staff are almost unanimous in their high regard for the school. Since the school's registration in August 2015, leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- Leaders have prioritised establishing the best possible climate for learning, the highest quality of teaching, arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, and ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. This began with the refurbishment of the premises to an excellent and safe standard. With the exception of physical education, the high-quality facilities cover all of the required areas of learning, especially for science, art and technological learning. While good arrangements have been made for physical education and sport off-site, the space for outside informal play is very small, although suitable for the number currently on roll.
- Leaders have appointed a strong team of teaching staff who are beginning to develop partnerships with other schools to support the development of teaching. The headteacher has made very effective use of teaching expertise and systems established at the associated preparatory school. Subject leaders have relished the opportunity to be innovative in their implementation of the curriculum. As a result, they have ensured excellent teaching in superbly resourced and high-quality learning environments for pupils.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is excellent. Formal systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are rigorous, and include checks on books, teachers' planning, pupil assessment information, as well as classroom observations. There is no complacency, with weekly after-school sessions to ensure consistently high-quality teaching with support offered when needed. Systems for staff performance management are in place and based on the model successfully used at the preparatory school. However, it is too early in the school's development for the performance management cycle to have been completed.
- The leadership of assessment is good. Systems for assessing pupils' progress are firmly established. Twice-termly assessments are used to carefully check the progress of individuals over time in all subjects. However, leaders have not put in place formal systems for monitoring the progress of different pupil groups or carrying out overviews of pupil performance. They intend to do this before the end of the academic year.
- The curriculum is suitably broad. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in a range of enrichment activities, trips and visits. Many of these relate to sport, such as fencing and rugby. Music is a strong feature of the school, with many pupils taking instrumental lessons. A successful residential trip to Snowdonia provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to get to know each other and visit an important national park. Opportunities to participate in a broader range of trips and visits, charity work, performing arts and award schemes are under development. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because staff at all levels are excellent role models and have the highest expectations for pupils to achieve and be the best they can.
- The quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is good. Pupils learn to evaluate and articulate different viewpoints. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong, they are tolerant, and develop respect and understanding of other cultures and ways of life. Pupils say they learn about other cultures by speaking to their peers who come from different countries and faiths. Consequently, they have a strong and clear sense of fundamental British values. Leaders do not tolerate extremist or partisan views. Excellent links with parents, including a well-attended presentation on online safety, also help foster an open culture for pupils' welfare and safety.
- In line with the request from the Department for Education (DfE), inspectors reviewed the school's schemes of work for sixth form teaching. The school has a comprehensive programme of study in place, which includes age-appropriate opportunities for personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) education, careers advice and work experience. Detailed schemes of work for all of the planned subjects are now in place, including for the extended project qualification (EPQ). Consequently, the school is likely to meet the standards for post-compulsory-age provision.

■ The governance of the school

- The proprietors and the governing body are active in their support and monitoring of the school through, for example, routine visits to the school. They formally check on the work of the school three times a year to monitor the quality of provision and check compliance with the independent school standards. Additional checks, such as on the effectiveness of the school safeguarding systems, are also conducted. In the first year of the school, the proprietors have used these visits to establish a firm baseline for the school's performance. This has included checks on the quality of teaching and ensuring that welfare, health and safety arrangements meet requirements. Governors use information from these visits to challenge school leaders and support them to make improvements.
- The governing body has yet to formally collect information on pupils' performance. They plan to do this at the end of the school year when information is gathered for the annual report to the Alpha Plus Board.
- The school makes use of the many services provided by the Alpha Plus Group; this includes access to staff training and personnel support.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all of the required recruitment checks are undertaken when staff join the school. Staff files are well organised but some minor administrative changes were made to the recording of these checks in the single central record during the inspection. The school policies for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are all in place and have due regard for current guidance. All staff have received training in safeguarding, fire safety and first aid. The designated leaders for child protection and fire safety have undertaken suitable higher-level training.
- All staff have been given training for the prevention of radicalisation and extremism so they are able to identify and report any concerns. However, the school has yet to develop systems for reviewing policies and monitoring recruitment, attendance and other welfare, health and safety checks. As a result, leaders are not able to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and procedures or identify any concerns that need further action.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to structure pupils' learning. Challenge and enthusiasm is an inherent part of teaching. Teachers skilfully build on prior learning while taking every opportunity to extend all pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils rise to this challenge, are keen to have a go, and willingly share their thoughts and ideas. Pupils listen well to each other, and teachers use questioning and pupils' responses highly effectively to assess and develop pupils' learning, to rectify any misconceptions and secure rapid progress.
- Teachers universally plan activities to interest and engage pupils. The resources that they develop are of the highest quality. Pupils use these well, both in the classroom and beyond, to support their excellent learning. The content and quality of work in pupils' books reflects the pride they take in their learning.
- Leaders and teachers know and understand the needs of each pupil. They use this to provide individual support or to adapt teaching to meet each individual's educational needs or stage of English language development.
- Highly positive relationships between pupils and teachers are key to pupils' learning and their outstanding attitudes to learning. Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Pupils understand the importance in using and applying them in different subjects. For example, pupils apply their numeracy skills to draw graphs in science and their writing skills to provide full answers to questions or describe experiments.
- Teachers provide pupils with high-quality feedback on their work within lessons and through marking. As a result, pupils understand their strengths and make excellent use of the feedback teachers provide to improve their work and move their learning forward at pace. Any pupils experiencing difficulties are identified quickly. Pupils say that the additional help teachers provide helps them to be highly successful learners.
- Teachers plan and use homework very effectively. Tasks are relevant and build on lesson content to extend and check pupils' understanding. Pupils recognise the importance of completing homework tasks and the related tasks set during their lessons in helping them to achieve. They consistently make every effort to complete the work set to the best of their ability. In their enthusiasm to do well, pupils put a lot of effort into tackling the challenging tasks that teachers provide. This partnership between teachers and pupils, the close checking of pupils' progress, together with pupils' own identification of when they may need help, secures their rapid and equal achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils speak with pride about their school, the sense of community they feel, and that the school is preparing them well for the future. However, there are too few opportunities for them to learn how to be leaders or to develop first-hand knowledge and understanding of the local community.
- Pupils are learning about those less fortunate than themselves. They have raised some funds for charity and brought food into school for a local food bank. A planned programme to develop leadership skills and community knowledge is due to start in September 2016. This will include access to community service through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- The programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is broad and well planned. It is delivered across the curriculum and through timetabled philosophy lessons, tutorial sessions and weekly assemblies. These enable pupils to develop an understanding of themselves as well as learn about public institutions in England. They learn about current affairs, democracy, key moral issues and the world they live in.
- Pupils have a good understanding of online safety. They know about how to keep themselves safe from bullying, the risks posed both by extremism and when travelling in London. Pupils have confidence in staff to help them with any concerns they may have. Staff take excellent care of pupils both on and off site, including when they make use of off-site sports facilities. These all very effectively support pupils' physical and emotional well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have settled into the school exceptionally well. Without exception, pupils show respect for each other and their school. They speak of their school with pride and a sense of community.
- In all lessons, pupils show a thirst for learning and an aspiration to achieve their best. They demonstrate exceptionally high levels of engagement in lessons. They act impressively and with maturity on advice from teachers, noting where they are succeeding as well as what they need to do to improve.
- Throughout the school, pupils act with high levels of responsibility, courtesy and consideration for others. Their behaviour both in and out of lessons is exemplary.
- Pupils attend very regularly. They arrive punctually at lessons and speedily settle to their learning.
- The behaviour policy is known by pupils and staff and used consistently. Staff use the school's 'gold notes' policy extremely well to support pupils' development as learners, for example, recognising when they have shown resilience in their learning. Pupils set high standards of behaviour for themselves. On the rare occasions when sanctions are required, they are applied and recorded in line with the school's policy.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Leaders formally assess all pupils, regardless of any information from their previous schools, when they join. The progress pupils make is then regularly checked. Pupils' work in class is monitored and twice-termly assessment information is reviewed against predicted GCSE performance. The individual tracking information from the two terms since opening shows that virtually all of the Year 7 and Year 9 pupils currently on roll are making substantial progress from their starting points in every subject.
- Across all subjects, including in English and mathematics, the substantial amount of high-quality work in books shows that all pupils are developing excellent knowledge, skills and understanding. The completion rates and quality of their written work is excellent, reflecting their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are able to describe their learning in depth, expressing themselves confidently and with maturity and demonstrating they are all performing equally well.
- Pupils are well read and read both for enjoyment and to further their learning. They ensure they are well prepared for lessons by reading the required subject matter beforehand as well as doing any additional reading suggested by teachers.

- All pupils, regardless of ability, are encouraged to achieve at a higher level. They all rise to this challenge. The most able benefit from work that gives them opportunities to work at levels above their current school age to deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding. Similarly, less-able pupils, those who have special educational needs, and the high proportion who speak English as a second language are also very well supported to achieve their best. For example, during the inspection, pupils in a lower set mathematics lesson were seen to be highly active and engaged. As one boy was explaining his solution to the class, another said, 'I get this now'. The strong sense of learning and progress was palpable, reflecting excellent pupil–teacher relationships and the high expectations set by the teacher.
- The school has devised a programme for pupils to learn about careers and their options for the future. Part of this includes the role of subject teachers to help pupils to understand the career options available from different subjects. Year 9 pupils have been well informed and guided about their subject choices for when they enter Year 10. They very confidently see this as part of their pathway to their future.
- It is not possible to make comparisons with national benchmarks because of the short time the school has been open. There are no published examination results.

School details

Unique reference number	142336
Inspection number	10012988
DfE registration number	213/6002

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

Type of school	Senior
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	None at current time
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group Ltd
Chair	Sir John Ritblat
Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Baker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£21,700
Telephone number	020 7535 3530
Website	www.wetherbysenior.co.uk
Email address	admin@wetherbysenior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wetherby Senior School is a secondary independent day school for boys aged 11 to 16 years which opened on 7 September 2015 in newly refurbished premises.
- The school is owned by The Alpha Plus Group. It is the third school in the Wetherby Group, which also includes Wetherby School and Wetherby Preparatory School.
- A single headteacher has responsibility for both the senior and preparatory schools.
- The school is registered to take up to 400 boys but there are currently 67 on roll aged 11 to 14 years in year groups 7 and 9.
- None of the pupils currently on roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, none of whom are in the early stages of learning to speak English.
- Six of the directors of the Alpha Plus Group form the governing body which also provides governance for all of the group's schools.
- The school aims to provide 'first class learning that enables its pupils to achieve their full potential in a challenging yet secure and caring environment' and 'to develop a strong sense of community with pupils, staff and parents'.

- Pupils from the preparatory school have direct entry into the senior school. Those from other schools sit an examination and attend an interview before a placement is offered.
- The school makes use of sports facilities at the Park Club in Acton, West London, and nearby Regent's Park, but has no other alternative provision.
- This is the school's first inspection since opening.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning activities in 20 lessons, across subjects, and saw teachers for the age groups currently on roll. Some lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also visited three tutorial sessions and an assembly held in a nearby church.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and subject leaders.
- Inspectors met pupils informally throughout the inspection and held two formal meetings with pupils in each of the two year groups currently on roll.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives of the proprietor and governing body.
- Documentation relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and curriculum planning were examined. Teachers' assessments and pupils' work were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the responses from 17 questionnaires completed by staff. In addition, 19 parental responses from Ofsted's online Parent View survey and the school's own survey of parental views were considered
- This inspection, commissioned by the DfE, was the school's first inspection since opening. In addition, the DfE asked the inspection team to look at schemes of work for sixth form subjects.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Bailey

Ofsted Inspector

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