

# Whitefield Schools

Macdonald Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4AZ

## Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is not effective because leaders and governors are unable to demonstrate that the use of secure rooms is appropriate, effective or proportionate to the needs of the pupils being placed in them.
- A small number of pupils are repeatedly placed in a secure room with a locked door when staff are unable to manage their behaviour by other means.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teachers and other adults support the needs of most pupils well. Teachers use their knowledge and expertise well to plan interesting activities that engage pupils in their learning.
- Most pupils make outstanding progress in their learning, as a result of effective teaching and targeted support. There are no groups of pupils who fail to make rapid progress from their different starting points. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who demonstrate more challenging behaviours.
- Pupils follow courses that are carefully designed to meet their needs and provide them with challenges set at an appropriate level. This allows all pupils to be prepared well for their next steps.
- Governors and directors of the academy trust provide strong support and challenge to leaders to ensure that most pupils make rapid and sustained progress in their learning.
- There is a culture of high expectations. All staff are extremely well supported in their professional development. This is reflected in the high standards of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Most pupils behave well and develop positive relationships with staff and each other. Some make very good progress in their personal development and become increasingly independent.
- Children in the early years make rapid progress as a result of highly effective teaching and well-planned learning activities. Children are prepared well for Year 1 because teachers start to plan for the support they need as soon as they join the school.
- Sixth-form students benefit from a variety of programmes that prepare them well for purposeful and productive lives when they leave the school.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Leaders and governors should ensure that pupils are safeguarded effectively by:
  - reviewing the use of the three rooms known as calming rooms, ensuring that pupils are not placed in secure rooms for repeated and prolonged periods of time
  - carrying out a thorough risk assessment following any incident that leads to a pupil being placed in a secure room to avoid similar incidents occurring in the future
  - ensuring that discussions with parents and other professionals identify appropriate behaviour management strategies that lead to improved outcomes and inform pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, personal support plans and reviews
  - reviewing the school's behaviour policy with all stakeholders to ensure that procedures and practices for managing challenging behaviours are applied in a consistent and appropriate manner throughout the school
  - providing members of the governing body and directors of the trust with enough information to allow them to reach an informed view about the use of secure rooms.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leadership is inadequate because some aspects of safeguarding are ineffective. Some pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviours are locked inside a secure room for long periods of time. Leaders are not monitoring the frequency of these incidents closely enough by keeping a detailed analysis of pupils' ages, needs or levels of vulnerability. They have not carried out risk assessments to identify how to avoid repeated use of these rooms for a small number of pupils. There is little evidence to demonstrate that the rooms are having a positive effect on the behaviour of pupils. In a significant number of cases, pupils are placed in the rooms more frequently or for longer periods of time, as their behaviour worsens.
- Leaders were unable to show how parents and other professionals were made aware that pupils had been placed in a secure room. Individual behaviour plans, EHC plans and pupils' files do not include enough information about the use of these rooms. This has prevented parents and other professionals, including social workers, supporting children looked after by the local authority, from discussing the appropriateness of the actions taken by the school.
- The school's behaviour policy refers to the use of 'calming rooms', which is not an accurate description of the three secure, padded and bare spaces that are used. Two of the three rooms have no natural light and occupants are unable to see outside or hear clearly. All the rooms are poorly ventilated and have doors which are unable to be opened from the inside.
- Aside from the ineffective arrangements for safeguarding some pupils, leaders have made significant improvements since the academy trust was formed. They have successfully instilled high expectations across the school and are continually seeking ways to develop partnerships within the local community to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Valued staff expertise is shared through the outreach services offered to other schools, the work of the teaching school alliance and a wide range of training opportunities provided through the Whitefield Research and Development Centre. All staff are encouraged to be the best that they can be and many have chosen to remain at the school as they progress in their careers.
- Parents and staff consider pupils to be safe from harm. Inspectors agree that pupils' physical well-being is promoted well and that positive relationships are the norm.
- Leaders use all additional funding, including the pupil premium and the primary sports funding, effectively. Good use is made of the sports funding to ensure that all pupils participate in regular physical education activities taught by qualified staff employed by the school. Leaders have used some of the pupil premium funding to purchase additional speech and language therapy services. This is ensuring that disadvantaged pupils get the support that they need more quickly. Leaders are able to demonstrate how the use of all additional funding has improved pupils' outcomes.

- School leaders work collaboratively with each other and all linked professionals to analyse the progress pupils make and to ensure that any changes to their provision are planned well in advance. This enables pupils to be successful when they take their next steps.
- The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils extremely well. Different courses, delivered across the three separate schools, are designed to meet the varied and complex needs of all pupils. Most pupils make rapid and sustained progress because they are appropriately challenged and supported.
- Learning activities, including extra-curricular trips and visits, focus strongly on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ensure that pupils are prepared well for when they leave the school. The 'Project Search' programme has been devised and managed by school leaders working alongside health and business professionals. As a result of the successful implementation of this programme, an increasing number of pupils gained paid employment when they left the school last year.
- Leaders work collaboratively across a number of local and national professional forums to externally moderate assessment information and share good practice. A school improvement partner, provided through the local authority, has made an initial visit to the school. Although external links regarding teaching and learning are strong, leaders have not sought to evaluate the use of the secure rooms using appropriate external agencies or local authority safeguarding officers.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors and directors of the trust are knowledgeable about most areas of the school's work and use their expertise to provide leaders with strong support. They hold leaders robustly to account for maintaining high standards and successfully implementing the school's improvement plan. They are seeking to expand the trust to extend the services that can be offered to the local community. Finances are well managed and governors check that any additional funding is having the desired impact on improving pupils' opportunities and outcomes. Governors and directors generally have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning carefully. However, they have not asked for, or been provided with, sufficient information to allow them to check that pupils have only been placed in a secure room in exceptional circumstances.

## **Safeguarding**

- Some arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. A small number of pupils are being placed repeatedly against their will in secure rooms for long periods of time. Behaviour policies and records are not sufficiently detailed and do not inform discussions held with governors, parents and other professionals.
- In all other areas of safeguarding, leaders can demonstrate strong systems and procedures. All the required checks on an individual's suitability to work with children are carried out before they start work at the school. Safeguarding and child protection

policies reflect the latest statutory guidance. Staff and governors have received regular training in keeping children safe. Systems for following up any concerns are understood by everyone. Comprehensive records demonstrate that leaders work closely with other agencies and the local authority to support vulnerable pupils and their families. The school site is well maintained. Procedures for moving around the site and travelling from one school to another are managed very well by all adults to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching and learning expectations are fully understood by all staff and applied consistently across all three schools. This ensures that pupils make strong progress and settle quickly when they move across key stages and classes.
- Teachers and other adults know their pupils well and have an accurate understanding of their needs. This allows them to plan engaging activities that keep pupils interested in their learning. Most teachers quickly identify when pupils need additional support and ensure that this is provided. They set challenging targets and systematically record every small step of progress. This ensures that nearly all pupils make rapid progress towards their targets.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are usually very positive. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to contribute and join in.
- Most support staff are clear about their roles because they work closely with teachers to plan and deliver lessons. Occasionally, some teachers do not provide sufficient guidance and additional adults are deployed less successfully. This slows the progress that some pupils make.
- Teachers focus on important life skills and ensure that pupils have lots of opportunities to practise them. Literacy and numeracy skills are regularly reinforced as appropriate to each pupil's needs. Some most-able pupils can read aloud fluently, write in full sentences and talk about what they have learned. Every pupil is challenged to make rapid progress from their different starting points.
- Communication skills are actively promoted in every lesson using a variety of approaches. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and identify any misconceptions. However, some opportunities are missed during social times to reinforce these skills.
- Teaching is not outstanding because not all teachers apply the behaviour policy in a consistent manner when dealing with a small group of very challenging pupils. Some staff do not ensure that repeated visits to a secure room are avoided by seeking alternative strategies to manage these incidents. Teachers have different understandings and practices regarding the use of these rooms. For example, a primary teacher told inspectors that younger pupils were never sent there and several teachers stated that older pupils were only placed in a room for short periods of time. The school's records show that both these views are incorrect.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's policy of placing pupils repeatedly against their will in a secure room suggests that, for the small numbers involved, not enough consideration has been given to their emotional well-being. This is the reason why personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Other aspects of the school's work to promote pupils' welfare are very effective. Most pupils are supported well and make good progress in their social and emotional aspects of learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to become confident learners and start to accept greater levels of responsibility as they move through the school. Some become increasingly independent as they learn how to take care of themselves.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe. Some were able to explain to inspectors that bullying was unacceptable and understood what to do if they had a concern. Pupils are encouraged to share their views and are represented on the governing body by a pupil governor who reports back to the student council. Minutes of meetings show that the views of pupils are taken seriously and are often acted upon.
- Pupils and their families are provided with valued and effective support from the school's family liaison officers and a team of therapists who work at the school. Parents appreciate the help they receive and express few concerns about the school's work.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a calm and welcoming place for most of the time. Any disruption to learning is kept to a minimum and usually handled appropriately.
- The school has effective systems for tracking attendance and ensures that most pupils attend regularly and are punctual. As a result, overall attendance rates have been maintained at a relatively high level for some years. Leaders continue to work closely with outside agencies and parents to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils who are persistently absent. For example, some medical appointments are now held at the school to avoid pupils needing to travel elsewhere.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because a small minority of pupils with very challenging behaviours are not supported as well as they should be. They are not encouraged to reflect on their behaviour after being placed in a secure room. On too many occasions, pupils are just returned to their class and the reasons for their behaviour are not properly evaluated.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Overall, pupils make outstanding progress from their different starting points across a wide range of measures. This is because a careful analysis of individual needs is carried out when pupils first attend the school and accurate starting points are established. Teachers set aspirational targets and ensure that pupils make the required rate of progress to successfully achieve them.
- Leaders check that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are accurate by measuring and checking all outcomes against available national assessment information or similar assessments carried out within other schools. Most pupils make rapid and sustained progress across all parts of the school.
- Standards across all three types of provision and all key stages have risen steadily over the last five years. All pupils do equally well. There are no discernible differences between any groups, including pupils who are disadvantaged or looked after, or those who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The small number of pupils who are placed in secure rooms make at least good progress towards their learning targets.
- Most pupils make excellent progress in developing skills that will be useful to them as young adults. Some pupils become increasingly independent and accept greater responsibility for their own welfare, health and safety. This is reflected in the increasing number who are successful in work placements and employment.
- The most able children attending the early years provisions are supported well to develop their literacy skills and some achieve the required standard in national phonics checks.
- Older pupils who are the most able are entered for external examinations in an increasing range of subjects. Some achieve very well compared with national expectations.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning within the early years provision has improved since the school became an academy. Leadership structures have been reviewed and strengthened. This has ensured that high expectations and standards are maintained across both early years departments.
- Children have their individual needs carefully assessed when they arrive to identify the level of support they need. Consequently, they get off to a very positive start and continue to be successful as they move through the school. They receive excellent support from adults who allow them to develop good social and personal skills. This prepares them well for entry into Year 1.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers make sure that learning makes sense and there is a strong focus on developing communication skills. All adults take good account of every child's starting point to check that they are making good or better progress.
- Teachers use the indoor and outdoor learning areas imaginatively to engage children and to support learning across the different areas of the curriculum. They focus

appropriately and consistently on teaching children about the importance of good behaviour. As a result, children generally behave and cooperate well with each other. They learn well-established routines that help them to settle quickly to their learning.

- Leaders have ensured that systems and practices are fully understood by all staff. Monitoring and assessment arrangements are applied well and staff support children's behaviour in a consistent and caring manner.
- Partnerships with parents are sought and developed well. Parents know how to support their child's learning at home, which hastens the progress they are able to make.

## **16 to 19 study programmes**

## **Outstanding**

- A range of courses have been carefully designed to meet the needs of all students within the sixth form. Activities are delivered at the school, at college or at hospital bases. Students make equally impressive progress across all parts of the provision.
- The most able students complete courses that lead to accreditation, acquiring appropriate literacy and numeracy qualifications. They participate in a wide range of community projects, internships and volunteer placements that improve their self-confidence and allow them to become increasingly independent. Some are provided with work placements that lead to employment opportunities when they leave. The 'Project Search' initiative is increasingly successful and more pupils found paid employment when they left the school last year than ever before.
- Students who require more support follow a school-based programme, which includes regular links with the local community. They are supported well to develop their organisational skills and respond positively to different settings and stimuli. Many students successfully undertake a range of accredited courses appropriate to their needs and aspirations.
- Detailed information, careers advice and guidance are provided to students and their families in good time to allow any further support to be carefully planned and commissioned. As a result, all of last year's leavers were successfully placed in education, employment or appropriate social care provision.
- The development of the sixth form has been supported well by leaders and governors. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and apply the agreed policies in a consistent manner. Teachers and other adults support students well to ensure that they achieve their targets. The personal development and welfare of pupils is promoted well and incidents of challenging behaviour are rare.



## School details

Unique reference number	140795
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10023594

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	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	54
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Caroline Sheppard
Principal	Laura Pease
Telephone number	020 8531 3426
Website	<a href="http://www.whitefield.org.uk">www.whitefield.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:whitefield.school@sch.lbwf.gov.uk">whitefield.school@sch.lbwf.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Whitefield School is a special school for pupils who have severe or complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school 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 within the Bart's Health NHS trust.
- The school has been a national teaching school since 2012. It joined with the Joseph Clarke School for children who have visual impairment and complex needs to form the Whitefield Academy Trust in 2014. The trust also offers an outreach service and a research and development centre to other providers.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan. A small proportion of pupils are children looked after. Currently one in four pupils are girls.
- The proportion of pupils who are entitled to the additional pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is larger than in most other schools. The largest pupil groups are from Black African, Pakistani, Black Caribbean, White British and other White backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as a second language is also above the national average.
- The school does not use 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.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors visited the teaching and learning activities taking place in all three schools that make up Whitefield Schools. Many observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders and covered a range of subjects, groupings, types of provision and teachers.
- A visit was made to Whipps Cross Hospital to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project Search 16 to 19 programme. During the visit, conversations were held with students and a manager of the hospital trust supporting the programme.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust and the chair of the academy trust accompanied by three other governors and directors. Leaders responsible for the early years provision and the sixth form met with inspectors. A telephone conversation took place with the school improvement partner contracted to work with the school by the local authority.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, including family support officers and therapists. The views of 16 staff, expressed in the online questionnaire conducted during the inspection, were considered.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 30 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the school's parental surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection and took account of the school's pupil surveys.
- Documentation detailing the school's work was evaluated by inspectors. This included: the school's self-evaluation and action plans, pupil progress tracking information, behaviour and attendance records, case studies of individual pupils, governing body minutes and a scrutiny of safeguarding records.

## Inspection team

Lesley Cox, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Denise James-Mason	Ofsted Inspector

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