

Whitehall Park School

Ashmount Road, Islington, London N19 3BH

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school's leadership team, together with those responsible for governance, provides an aspirational vision for all pupils.
- Teachers and support staff appreciate the emphasis leaders put on their training to develop classroom practice. Staff use training well to improve pupils' progress.
- Teaching is consistently good and provides pupils of all abilities with high levels of challenge. Support staff are deployed particularly well in classrooms. Consequently, pupils' progress is good and improving.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well. Highly skilled staff ensure that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of phonics is good. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was in line with the national average in 2016.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well. Pupils know how the school's values support their personal development.
- Behaviour is impeccable. Pupils show respect towards each other and adults in the school. They are extremely polite and courteous to visitors.
- Leaders use additional funding successfully to eradicate differences between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and others nationally.
- Parents are thrilled with the high-quality education their children receive at Whitehall Park. They can see how teachers excite and enthuse pupils in stimulating lessons.
- The early years provision is good. Children receive high-quality teaching that has ensured that the proportion reaching a good level of development has remained above national averages since the school opened in 2014.
- Leaders agree that the early years outdoor provision does not sufficiently challenge children's physical development. It does not reflect the same high quality of the classroom learning environment.
- The curriculum develops pupils' love of learning. Subject leaders plan it very well. It provides stimulating topics that develop pupils as curious learners.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, agree that the school's assessment system requires further refinement. This is to enable teachers to plan more sharply so that the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding national standards increases further still.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the school's assessment system further so that it:
 - enables teachers to plan learning activities more sharply to further increase the proportion of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, meeting and exceeding the national standards.
- Improve the quality of outdoor provision in the early years so that it provides children with sufficiently challenging opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The energy and vigour of the headteacher are infectious. With the support of the governors, she has appointed a school team that is committed to the vision of high achievement for all pupils. Leaders' approach of respecting everybody's contribution means that staff morale is high.
- Leaders place strong emphasis on all staff being reflective teachers. This is evident in the effective systems in place to evaluate staff performance. Teachers and support staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their career path and training. Leaders hold staff to account successfully for pupils' achievement because they set well thought-through targets to measure performance.
- The curriculum for the early years and key stage 1 is well planned. Subject leaders are creating a broad and balanced approach to ensure that skills and concepts are covered through year group topics. This is an ongoing process as the school roll increases and because the curriculum will soon incorporate key stage 2 learning. Topics are well planned to engage and develop pupils' curiosity and interests. For example, in Year 2, the Vikings topic underpins the work pupils do in and out of the class. This has produced some good-quality writing. Middle leaders told inspectors that the assessment system will need further adjustments as pupils move into the next stage of the curriculum requirements.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding ensures that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to good-quality support in class. These pupils also have an entitlement to out-of-school clubs. Leaders have made sure that differences are diminishing between this group of pupils and their peers in school and others nationally.
- Leaders work diligently to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that the additional funding is well spent. Staff make good use of external agencies and high-quality training to improve the quality of teaching and support for these pupils. As a result, pupils are making strong progress.
- The primary sport funding is used well to enhance playtimes for pupils. Coaches train pupils to become 'ambassadors' and 'play leaders' during lunchtimes. This results in pupils engaging in physical activities in a structured way. Pupils have a well-developed attitude to staying healthy.
- The school places an excellent focus on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The learning environment reflects this very effectively and the school's values, for example, are prominent around the building. During the inspection, pupils knew they were working on the value of 'compassion'. They knew how this helped them think of others and how their actions have an impact on other people. Pupils talk confidently about actions they can take should they see anything they believe to be hurtful.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A large number of families

responded very positively to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Many gave up their own time to help the staff move into the new building over half term. Their commitment is due to the strong relationship they have with the leadership team, particularly the headteacher. Parents readily offer praise using phrases such as, 'family feel' and 'community spirit' to describe Whitehall Park School. They feel their children are 'loved' by the staff who encourage them to learn.

Governance

- Trustees and the local governing body share the ambition and commitment of school leaders to ensure that pupils achieve their very best. They challenge leaders' actions and use information on school performance to set the future direction of the school. This has been successful as the school continues to expand.
- Members of the governing body bring a raft of skills to the strategic leadership team. They are well informed and use external reviews to validate their evaluations. Regular visits to the school from link governors ensure that safeguarding and health and safety procedures are robust and fit for purpose.
- Governors have a good understanding of how leaders use the pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Meticulously kept records are up to date and of high quality. Since opening, the school has moved from one site to another and finally moved into the new school building. Leaders have managed these moves admirably and ensured pupils' safety throughout
- The trust and governors ensure that the school's procedure for recruiting staff and checking volunteers is robust. Regular audits mean that those responsible for maintaining the school's records are also held to account for their work.
- Training is thorough and covers recent government guidelines, including spotting when pupils may be at risk of harm from female genital mutilation and extremism. Staff have a good understanding of how to raise concerns using the internal school system.
- Parents are supportive of the work the school does to keep their children safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan effectively to engage pupils in learning. Despite some teachers being relatively new to the profession, they show a good understanding of what is required to provide pupils with a good level of education.
- Adults and pupils enjoy strong and positive relationships. This is a strength that is seen throughout the school. As a result, behaviour for learning is very strong. Pupils love learning and happily talk about what they are doing. They help each other during lessons without being asked by an adult.
- Teachers provide clear guidance to pupils. This ensures that they understand what

they need to do to deepen their understanding, particularly in writing. Pupils develop stamina and show that they are able to use a variety of techniques to improve their grammar. As a result, outcomes are good and improving for writing.

- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally in the 2016 assessments in Reception and the Year 1 phonics screening check. As a result, these pupils are a focus group for teachers. Leaders check teachers' practice regularly to ensure that these pupils receive good-quality classroom teaching. Currently, pupils eligible for the additional funding are making progress similar to that of their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that these pupils have good-quality support that enables them to achieve well. Leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of adult support regularly to make sure that pupils make good progress.
- The school's approach to teaching mathematics develops pupils' ability to reason and explain their strategies. There are times when some pupils have not grasped concepts in mathematics as quickly in lessons. As a result, this limits progress. Leaders agree that teachers are developing the confidence to change teaching strategies and unpick pupils' misconceptions more quickly.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils gain ground in their early reading because phonics is taught well. Leaders choose high-quality resources that develop a love of reading for pleasure. Pupils who did not meet the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check have now caught up and are on track to reach the standard in Year 2. Most-able pupils are developing fluency and confidence in using expression when reading aloud. They understand the importance of learning to read to get a job in the future and that their teachers would be 'shocked to the bone' if they could not read.
- Leaders and governors have introduced a tracking system to capture teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. Teachers use this information to plan lessons and ensure that pupils are regularly challenged to improve their work. Leaders agree that this system is developing, and further refinement will better support teachers' evaluations of pupils' work. Leaders also acknowledge that this priority is ongoing to include the assessment of the other subjects and the key stage 2 curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated learners. They talk confidently about how to improve their work. Staff and pupils have developed strong and respectful relationships. As a result, pupils respond positively in class to any adult interventions.
- Pupils at Whitehall Park are very happy and extremely proud to attend this school. They have a mature attitude to caring for others. As one pupil said, 'We treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.'
- When asked about feeling safe, pupils said, 'Teachers protect us.' They understood how teachers help them stay safe by teaching them road safety and to play sensibly on

the equipment.

- Pupils have a good understanding of equality that is appropriate to their age. They fully understand how to treat others with respect. Bullying is something that pupils say does not happen at Whitehall Park. Pupils say that people should be treated the same no matter who they are.
- Pupils' knowledge of British values is developing very well. Pupils could describe how the 'staying on green' system of behaviour management helps them increase their understanding of the 'rule of law'. School councillors talk confidently about how the voting system works to gain membership of the group.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the work the school does in ensuring their security when online. They talk confidently about how this applies when using their digital technology at home.
- Pupils already have aspirations for jobs in the future. For example, some aim to work in advertising, law and design.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate the school's values in the way they help each other in lessons and on the playground. Pupils are very positive about how the school helps them to settle in and make new friends.
- The school's system for behaviour management is successful. Pupils know what is expected of them from all staff. They talk about 'green' behaviour and staff promote positive behaviour consistently. As a result, the logs show a reduction in low-level incidents.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary in class and when moving around the school building. Incidents that disrupt learning are extremely rare. Staff manage pupils who have behaviour difficulties very well.
- Leaders have put in place successful systems to improve attendance. Currently, attendance is in line with the national average. Despite a reduction in overall persistent absence, there are a small number of pupils whose absence is still a concern. Leaders are working extremely hard to address this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Results for 2016 show that around four fifths of children reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year, which was above the national average.
- Disadvantaged children did not achieve as well as others nationally in 2016. Leaders have used the additional funding well this year to provide interventions so that these pupils are now achieving as well as their peers. Work in pupils' books shows that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Leaders track pupils' progress and provide high-quality support to ensure that their needs are met. Parents are involved in supporting the school's work to make sure that their children make good progress.
- Pupils who arrive in school with little English make strong progress and some are already exceeding age-related expectations. Work in pupils' books demonstrates good

development of reading and writing skills.

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check was in line with the national average. However, the small group of disadvantaged pupils did not achieve highly. Targeted provision has ensured that these pupils are now on track to reach the required standard in Year 2.
- Leaders ensure that mathematics is taught effectively. Teachers build on children's learning in the early years well. Work in pupils' books and school information show that all pupils make good progress in mathematics from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- From their starting points, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2016 was above the national average. However, children from disadvantaged backgrounds did not achieve as well as others nationally. Leaders recognised this and identified this group as a priority for staff. The work in pupils' books shows that these pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
 - The new early years leader is well supported by senior leaders. Together they have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. The early years team is relatively new to teaching. These teachers benefit very well from high-quality professional development. As a result, children enjoy a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities.
 - Leaders use effective systems to identify and support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These children are well supported and make good progress from their starting points.
 - Staff carefully analyse assessments of children's progress to identify next steps in children's learning. Staff follow children's ideas well and adapt learning activities to build on children's curiosity and interests. For example, this term, learning is focused on dinosaurs. Children have opportunities to create items for a character in the text they are reading. Children delight in the exciting activities available. One of the children said, 'I am making a sweet pot for Pierre', while carefully cutting and colouring on the design table. Another child, playing in the outside area, told the inspector that 'scientists' dug up dinosaur bones.
 - Staff plan activities that challenge all children. There are a number of opportunities to develop early writing skills. Children are beginning to form letters and words well. However, some children require more support in developing the correct pencil grip to improve their early writing.
 - Phonics teaching is good. The flexible setting arrangements mean that children are challenged appropriately. They move on to the next step in developing early reading skills when they are ready. This ensures that children are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- In the short time the setting has operated, the team of staff has built positive relationships with parents. Parents are invited in regularly to see their children learning

in the classes. Parents also have opportunities to contribute to the well-presented learning journeys, for example with 'Wow' moments. This additional information helps build a picture of children's development across each area for learning.

- Safeguarding is effective. Staff ensure that children are appropriately supervised during outside activities. Children know not to go outside without an adult being present.
- Since moving into the new building, leaders have faced the challenge of developing the early year's outdoor area. Leaders acknowledge that the outdoor environment currently does not provide sufficiently strong opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. It does not reflect the same high-quality learning that children enjoy in their classrooms.

School details

Unique reference number	140495
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10031662

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Free school
Age range of pupils	4–11 (currently 4–7)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	Local governing body and trust
Chair	Paul Domjan
Headteacher	Laura Birkett
Telephone number	020 7561 0113
Website	www.whitehallparkschool.co.uk
Email address	head@whitehallparkschool.org.uk
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.
- The school is part of the Bellevue Place Education Trust. The trust currently has seven start-up schools across London.
- The school opened in 2014 with two classes of children in the Reception Year. The school is increasing in size by two classes each year. In September 2017, the school will open the first classes in key stage 2.
- The school has moved locations a number of times over the last two years. The last temporary setting was in a local secondary school. The school moved into the permanent school building at the end of February 2017.

- The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms at least twice. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and lead teacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body, the trust, the link representative from the Department for Education and a representative from the school improvement service.
- Meetings were held with pupils from the school council and several prefects to discuss their learning and views on the school.
- All leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils reading, and talked to pupils in lessons and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' books across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 171 responses to Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with a group of parents during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the 22 responses to the staff survey and the 68 responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Morgan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017