

The Family School London

1–15 Bradley's Close, White Lion Street, London N1 9PN

Inspection dates

21–22 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, founders and governors have been successful in achieving their vision of creating a school which puts families at the heart of its work. Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff. They strive to secure continual improvement in all of the school's work.
- The headteacher inspires and supports his staff team to do the very best that they can to improve pupils' life chances. He is loved by pupils and respected by parents and staff. A highly skilled, thoughtful and committed leadership team supports the headteacher. Collectively, they make the school a very special place indeed.
- Staff are proud to work at the school and go above and beyond directed duties because they care so deeply about their pupils. Some staff choose to come into work early to join pupils for breakfast. As one member of staff said, 'It just feels like a family.'
- Pupils and their families benefit from high-quality therapeutic care and teaching, within a nurturing, safe learning environment. Therapists and teaching staff are passionate about their work and the impact they have on pupils' well-being and achievement.
- The school's approach has been successful in helping families to improve their lives. As one parent put it, 'The school has saved us. We were so isolated before coming here. Now we have friends.'
- The 'parent and carer curriculum' is a unique aspect of the school's work. Parent, carers and pupils learn together. Parents receive training and guidance to support their own learning and that of their children.
- The curriculum is underpinned by British values and by the school's work to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils, from their starting points when they join the school, make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A high proportion of pupils are reintegrated into mainstream school within four terms and the vast majority of these pupils keep their places in mainstream school.
- Pupils' behaviour improves rapidly when they join the school. Pupils were unfailingly respectful, friendly, polite and honest during the inspection. There were no incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are confident that staff deal with any form of bullying effectively.
- Teachers do not consistently give work to the most able pupils that helps them to make the best academic progress that they can.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils' well-being and behaviour for learning. However, they occasionally lack confidence in supporting pupils, particularly the most able, with their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the academic outcomes of the most able pupils in the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers set tasks that challenge pupils to make even better progress
 - teaching assistants receive continuous support and guidance to enhance the impact that they have on pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders, founders and governors have created a unique school. With support from the sponsors at the Anna Freud Centre, leaders have ensured that pupils receive high-quality therapy to improve their mental health and well-being. Alongside the therapy, pupils are supported extremely well by all staff to manage and improve their behaviour.
- Leaders and staff are approachable, caring and friendly. They ensure that pupils quickly settle at school so that they can benefit from strong teaching and make typically outstanding progress in their learning. The school is innovative and groundbreaking in its work with parents and families. The 'parent and carer curriculum' provides exceptional support for parents, carers and pupils. Parents join pupils for lessons alongside teaching staff and therapists. They learn how best to support their children through observing the work of the staff. In addition, parents attend separate sessions and receive additional training and guidance to help support their children at home.
- The curriculum rightly places a sharp emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers work hard to make up for the lost learning time of the past. As a result, pupils in all key stages make outstanding progress. Pupils enjoy work in other subjects and benefit from interesting work on various themes. The headteacher teaches science lessons as this had been identified as a subject which needed improvement. British values underpin the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoyed their recent work on the election and were highly articulate in sharing their own manifestos with inspectors.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. For some pupils, the collaborative work and the social element to learning that is so evident in the school's work has enabled them to experience success in their learning for the very first time. The curriculum is enriched by trips out of the school to go to the park or to go swimming.
- Leaders and governors have been rigorous in improving the work of the school since it opened. They have not shied away from difficult decisions and because of this, have eradicated weak teaching. Leaders ensure that staff are set challenging targets during the thorough appraisal process and they monitor the impact of these targets on pupils' outcomes. Leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching are incisive and accurate.
- Leaders have instilled a great sense of purpose in the school, with the ultimate goal being pupils' permanent reintegration into mainstream school. Staff, parents, carers and pupils share this sense of purpose. All have high expectations that their goals are achievable. Staff are genuinely delighted when pupils experience success. For example, one pupil found out some good news about his imminent reintegration to mainstream school during the inspection. He ran into school full of enthusiasm, straight to the headteacher's office to tell him the good news. Staff were visibly moved to see one of their pupils so happy. They ensured that his success was celebrated throughout the day.
- Leaders have managed the challenges of the temporary site extremely well. They ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to go to the park to make up for the lack

of outdoor space.

- Leaders decided to create pupil profiles for each individual pupil which contain their learning, behaviour and care plans. They align fully with the education, health and care plans, which a high proportion of the school population have. The profile captures important information about pupils succinctly. It provides a strong picture of pupils' development in all areas while they are at the school.
- Leaders identify accurate starting points for pupils' learning when they join the school. They track pupils' progress and attainment precisely to ensure that no pupil falls further behind in their learning. They also carefully track pupils' improvements in their behaviour for learning. This helps staff and leaders have an accurate and realistic timescale for pupils' reintegration into mainstream school.
- Leaders keep a careful check on pupils for a sustained period of time when they return to mainstream school. Families know that they can still ask for support from the school long after the pupils have left.
- Leaders' monitoring of attendance is robust. They promote good attendance in a range of ways. They use rewards, make phone calls to parents and sometimes deploy teaching assistants to go to pupils' homes and encourage parents and carers to help their child come into school. Leaders also offer a great many incentives. One pupil spoke fondly of how the headteacher agreed to jump into the swimming pool fully clothed if the pupil's attendance improved. As a result of leaders' actions, the attendance of individual pupils who are currently in this school has increased on average by 11% in comparison to their attendance at previous schools. Overall attendance is below the national average for maintained schools but the population of the school is frequently changing. This means that attendance improves and declines regularly, as pupils join or leave.
- Leaders use additional pupil premium funding well to support pupils eligible for free school meals. As a result, these pupils make strong progress from their starting points in the school. Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to provide individual support in mathematics, reading and writing sessions. The sports premium funding provides for additional swimming lessons for pupils, which they benefit greatly from. Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used wisely to ensure that education, health and care plans as well as pupils' individual learning plans are implemented.

Governance of the school

- Governors are a highly skilled, committed group of people who share leaders' strong moral imperative to improve pupils' life chances. They have an incisive knowledge of the school's strengths and a precise understanding of what they need to do to improve the school further. The founders of the school come from the Anna Freud Centre and also work as therapists in the school. This gives them a great deal of insight and helps to inform their work as governors.
- Governors offer a rigorous level of challenge to leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. They have extremely high expectations for what the school can achieve. Governors have a clearly articulated and ambitious vision for the school when

it moves to the new site.

- Governors have a detailed understanding of how additional funding is spent and the impact this has on pupils' progress.
- Governors ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors ensure that the checks made when recruiting staff are thorough. The checks meet statutory requirements.
- Staff and governors receive appropriate training in all aspects of safeguarding. Members of staff are highly vigilant. They know how to identify the possible signs that pupils may be at risk of radicalisation, extremism or female genital mutilation. They have an in-depth knowledge of the pupils in their care and know what they need to do to support each pupil in relation to their individual circumstances.
- All staff attend a daily 'safeguarding update' where they discuss any issues which have arisen during the day. Leaders act swiftly and effectively when any issue arises.
- Staff ensure that pupils are kept safe within the constraints of the temporary site. Risk assessments are thorough and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding because during their time at the school pupils make consistently outstanding progress in their learning. Some pupils make very strong progress. Teachers have an in-depth knowledge of every pupil. They understand pupils' preferred learning styles and their individual needs. This helps them to plan activities across the curriculum which interest, motivate and engage pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve when they join the school. They share these with parents, carers and pupils. Parents come into school regularly to work alongside their children in the classrooms. This helps parents to support their children's learning and behaviour at home.
- A special feature of teaching, learning and assessment is the school's approach to teaching reading. During 'D.E.A.R.' (drop everything and read) time, parents come in and read, not only with their own children, but with other children too. Pupils receive the right guidance on appropriate books to read which match age-related expectations. There is a wonderful community feel to these sessions and pupils make noticeable progress in their reading. Following the session, staff give parents further guidance and training on how to support their children's reading at home.
- Family learning sessions are another special feature of the school's work. Parents join children to work on a range of tasks together. For example, they compose emotive short poems and read these aloud to the whole group. Achievements are celebrated and pupils' self-belief visibly improves. Parents value these sessions greatly. They

support each other and learn together about how best to help their children.

- Teachers place great emphasis on teaching writing and mathematics. Work in books shows that pupils make good progress in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. They produce high-quality work. Teachers' discussions with pupils are motivational and help pupils to understand their next steps in learning.
- Pupils' writing skills improve dramatically once they are settled into school. Books show that many pupils who are currently in the school have made substantial progress. Pupils write about a range of interesting topics and themes. For example, pupils wrote their own election manifestos during the general election week. Pupils' work is well presented because they learn to take pride in their work. For some pupils, this is the first time that they have experienced such pride.
- Pupils enjoy sports and particularly benefit from their regular swimming lessons. They enjoy science lessons taught by the headteacher. Pupils across the school benefit from regular phonics lessons which help them to make much better progress in reading and writing. Pupils often come to the school with gaps in their phonics knowledge due to previous lost learning time. Teaching effectively helps to fill these gaps.
- Pupils' behaviour for learning improves significantly as soon as they start at the school. This is because staff quickly develop positive relationships with pupils while setting high expectations for behaviour, in line with the school's behaviour policy. There was no disruptive behaviour seen at all during the inspection. Any disruptive behaviour that does occur is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Teachers use the school's assessment system consistently and effectively to plan pupils' learning. Leaders monitor and support teachers in making their assessments and in ensuring that teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Occasionally, tasks set for the most able pupils do not challenge them to make the best possible progress that they can, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Sometimes teaching assistants lack confidence in their subject knowledge in some aspects of the curriculum. This affects the impact that they have on pupils' progress in some lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils join the school with a range of needs, some of which are extremely complex. The school provides incredibly well for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Therapists work alongside staff and pupils to ensure that every pupil gets the right sort of support.
- As a result, pupils feel cared for and quickly grow in confidence and self-belief. They become motivated to be successful, purposeful in their work and determined to succeed by being reintegrated into mainstream school.
- Staff go 'above and beyond' in this caring, nurturing school. They care deeply about their pupils and are constantly trying to think of ways to help them to learn better and to enjoy their learning. Leaders have incisive knowledge of every pupil. The school

offers a personalised approach to meeting each pupil's needs.

- During the inspection, pupils were polite, respectful and happy to chat about their school and their work. They were friendly and showed a great sense of humour. One pupil was incredibly interested in the inspector's role and said, 'Do you really work for the Queen?' Another pupil, having proudly shown inspectors his written political manifesto said, 'Would you vote for me, Miss?'
- The school effectively draws on professional support from outside the school when necessary to support pupils' needs.
- Pupils feel safe at school and compare the school very favourably with the schools they previously attended.
- Leaders prepare rigorous risk assessments to ensure pupils' safety when they are taken off site.
- Pupils' individual attendance improves significantly when they join the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour improves rapidly when they join the school. They respond well to the high expectations that staff have of them. They are motivated to improve their behaviour so that they can be reintegrated into mainstream school.
- Pupils move around the building in an orderly fashion and adhere to rules which are in place to manage the space available in the temporary site. For example, pupils wait patiently at the top of the narrow staircases if somebody is coming up the stairs.
- Pupils know that any bullying incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They know that the use of derogatory language is unacceptable and they understand the consequences of any poor behaviour.
- During the inspection, pupils' were proud to show how well behaved they could be.
- Leaders use one-day exclusions only when necessary to ensure pupils are kept safe. There have been no permanent exclusions since the school opened.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Over time, 64% of pupils who have attended the school since it opened have been successfully reintegrated into mainstream school within the school's own target of four terms.
- Of the pupils who have returned to mainstream schools since the school opened, 95% have retained their school places. This shows that they are extremely well-prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave the school.
- After a short settling in period, pupils make substantial progress in improving their behaviour for learning. Leaders track and monitor behaviour rigorously to ensure that pupils, parents and carers have a clear target to aspire to that will support their return to mainstream school.

- Pupils make very strong progress in their social, emotional and personal development because of the unique wrap-around care they receive from teachers and therapists.
- The majority of pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge which are below those expected for their age. During their time at the school, pupils make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps them to meet the demands of the curriculum when they return to mainstream school. Pupils' work shows that they have made sustained and substantial progress. Some pupils are now close to working at standards appropriate for their age. The most able pupils in the school are currently working within age-related expectations.
- The headteacher teaches science and supports other teachers' confidence in teaching the subject. This has had a positive impact on the progress that pupils make in this subject.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals make similarly strong progress to their peers but their attainment is not yet in line with all pupils nationally due to the learning time that they have lost in the past.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics, which supports their reading and writing development.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their starting points because staff provide excellent support, training and advice to address pupils' identified needs. The work of therapists has a significant and positive impact on improving pupils' emotional and mental health, which helps pupils to focus on learning.
- The most able pupils make consistently good progress in their learning. They would make even better progress if work set challenged them more and if teaching assistants' confidence in supporting learning in all subjects was strengthened.

School details

Unique reference number	141130
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10031697

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	5 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The Anna Freud Centre
Chair	Mary Target
Headteacher	Stephen Taylor
Telephone number	020 3693 4911
Website	www.thefamilyschoollondon.org
Email address	reception@thefamilyschoollondon.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Family School is an alternative provision free school that was established in September 2014. The school is sponsored by the Anna Freud Centre. The school is currently on a temporary site and accommodates 31 pupils who are between the ages of five to 14. When the school moves to its new site in 2018, it will accommodate 48 pupils. The school is currently oversubscribed. Pupils are taught in key stage groups.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above average.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The school takes pupils from several different local authorities. There are a number of children looked after at the school.
- The majority of pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- 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

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes at least twice. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body and met with a representative of the Anna Freud Centre. Inspectors spoke to the school's Department for Education adviser.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work. Inspectors also met with therapists to discuss their work.
- Inspectors carried out reviews of pupils' work to look at their progress over time. The majority of pupils' English and mathematics books were also reviewed. All pupils' individual profiles were reviewed.
- Inspectors talked to pupils at lunchtime, in lessons, and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of one response to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, and information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. The school's own recent parent survey was reviewed. Inspectors also considered letters received from parents.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Dominey

Ofsted Inspector

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