

# The Write Time

14 Willis Road, London CR0 2XX

## Inspection dates

7–9 November 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because some lessons do not sufficiently engage pupils in learning. Some staff are still developing the skills required to teach pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because they do not make the same good progress in mathematics and science as they do in English.
- Leaders do not make accurate checks on pupils' skills and abilities in all subjects when they enter the school and so cannot account for their rates of progress.
- Although pupils make good progress socially, emotionally and behaviourally, the school does not have a system to track and evaluate this progress.
- Although leadership is good, formal governance is at the earliest stages of development. Leaders acknowledge that external, impartial viewpoints will help to improve the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leadership is strong. The proprietor's vision, to make a sustainable, positive difference to the lives of pupils in especially challenging circumstances, is shared by all staff.
- Leaders support staff to develop their teaching skills effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving.
- Leaders' effective actions ensure that pupils' behaviour, attendance and engagement in learning significantly improve.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe and are kept as safe as possible.
- Parents, and those who place pupils at the school, speak very positively about The Write Time. One parent said, 'This school is the best thing that has ever happened to our family.'
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

### 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 teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers continue to have regular opportunities to participate in professional training so that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
  - teachers pitch learning activities at the right level of challenge to meet pupils' needs.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare by recording, monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - pupils' progress is monitored, recorded and evaluated in all subjects
  - pupils deepen their understanding and skills in mathematics and science.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - plans to form a governing body are realised
  - governors support leaders and hold them to account in the implementation of the school improvement plan.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The proprietor and his leadership team share a positive vision for pupils at The Write Time. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is good. They provide appropriate support and challenge to teachers, which are well linked to an effective appraisal system. However, although the quality of teaching has improved, more work and time are required to ensure that it is consistently good.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It includes all the required areas of learning and focuses predominantly on developing pupils' core skills in English and mathematics, as well as their personal and social skills. Pupils at key stage 4 take accredited courses in English language, English literature, mathematics, science, computing and the creative arts. Personalised mentoring sessions, and input from careers advisers who work within the wider organisation, ensure that pupils receive regular, impartial information, advice and guidance on their next steps.
- The school's commitment to preparing pupils for life in modern London and Britain, and to teaching pupils about equality, is good. Daily assemblies, social activities at lunchtimes and themed days all effectively contribute to pupils' understanding of themselves and the world around them. The curriculum is enhanced by activities and trips, such as to museums, careers fairs and sports centres. Pupils enjoyed recent themed days on healthy eating and team-building. Such activities have a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents, staff and those responsible for placing pupils at the school are universally positive about The Write Time. One parent summed up the views of others:

'The school liaises well with parents and has a good influence on pupils. Given the needs of the pupils and some of their challenges, they provide a calm environment. My child has made progress in this provision and speaks well of it.'
- The school is unable to provide accurate information about pupils' outcomes in all areas of the curriculum, including in relation to their personal, social and emotional progress. This is because pupils' starting points are not checked, other than their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

### Governance

- Until now, the proprietor has governed the school.
- A new governing body is being formed. Members have been identified and the terms of reference are currently being developed.

### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture ensures that the school's pupils, all of whom are especially vulnerable, are kept as safe as possible. Concerns are well documented and referred on

to external agencies in a timely way, where necessary.

- The school's designated safeguarding leaders are trusted, approachable and knowledgeable. Staff told the inspector that they are confident in referring concerns and seeking advice, guidance and support.
- There is regular training, daily briefings and frequent checks on staff's understanding of national safeguarding guidance. Staff are also fully aware of the signs of pupils being drawn into pertinent local issues, such as gang membership, sexual exploitation, drug abuse and knife crime.
- Where pupils' attendance is low, leaders and staff do all they can to ensure that pupils who are not at school are safe. This includes home visits and working effectively with the local authority to follow up on pupils' absence.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance. It is published on the school's website alongside all other required policies and information.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving as a result of good leadership.
- Leaders know what needs to improve and are taking appropriate action. The deputy headteacher ensures that staff receive regular, effective individual support and opportunities for team-teaching. The purpose of these sessions is to raise the quality of provision and standards, with an emphasis on engaging pupils and ensuring that learning tasks meet their needs. This has already had a demonstrable, positive impact, but not yet sufficiently so to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good in all subjects.
- Teaching typically enables pupils, all of whom have complex educational histories and social, emotional and mental health needs, to re-engage with learning. Where teaching is good, activities encourage pupils' participation and are effectively planned to develop pupils' self-esteem and prepare them for qualifications. In English lessons especially, pupils engage in discussion and show off their improving reading skills. They are enthusiastic about their learning.
- There are generally good relationships between pupils and staff, which facilitate pupils' good behaviour and willingness to learn. This is again especially the case in English, where very positive working relationships enable pupils to feel comfortable and secure in their learning. As a result, pupils are confident enough to ask questions and to request additional help. As one pupil put it, 'I do my work in English because I know that the teacher believes in me.'
- Some teachers have high academic expectations of pupils. Pupils' English books contain challenging work and exemplify good progress over time, evidently preparing them for their GCSE examinations. The same cannot be said, however, in mathematics and science.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

### Good

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is rightly prioritised. Pupils develop their social skills, improve their behaviour and re-engage with education. This is as a result of the school's child-centred approach, which promotes positive choices over enforced rules. Personalised mentoring is an integral element of each pupil's timetable.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They trust the staff, who they know are committed to supporting them. Pupils describe the school as a 'family' and say that there is no bullying.
- Pupils are taught effectively about how to stay safe, including online. Pupils also learn about important local issues, such as gang membership, drug abuse and knife crime.
- Pupils are taught about equality, discrimination and the importance of fundamental British values as a matter of course, and especially through daily assemblies and regular mentoring sessions.
- Although observation and anecdotal evidence confirm that pupils' personal development is good, leaders have only recently begun to consider how to accurately record pupils' personal, social and emotional progress in a useful, consistent way.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy attending school and being part of the small, positive community. They are generally respectful and kind to each other. Pupils' behaviour improves over time – the longer they stay, the greater the transformation.
- The few incidents of serious misbehaviour are dealt with effectively and recorded carefully. Most staff have an accurate understanding of pupils' needs and tailor teaching and enrichment activities accordingly.
- Attendance and punctuality are good overall. Most pupils attend well, which is a significant success as many of the pupils arrive at the school with histories of school refusal. Where pupils' attendance is too low, staff do all they can with the pupil, their family and external agencies to facilitate improvement.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- In mathematics and science, current pupils' workbooks show that they are making limited progress. This correlates with the learning observed during the inspection and the sparse assessment information available.
- In most other areas of the curriculum, the school is unable to provide information about, and evidence of, pupils' progress and outcomes.
- Pupils typically arrive at the school with significant gaps in their education. Many have been permanently excluded or have refused to attend school. Most attend the school for a short time and join and leave at various points throughout the academic year. Despite these challenges, current pupils are making good progress in relation to their emotional well-being and social skills and in English.

- Last year, at the end of key stage 4, pupils left the school well prepared for the next stage of their education. The majority of pupils were successful in gaining functional skills and GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics and science. All successfully proceeded to further education or are engaged on a traineeship programme.

## School details

Unique reference number	142621
DfE registration number	306/6016
Inspection number	10035816

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	Independent alternative provision
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	Chris Murray
Headteacher	Chris Murray
Annual fees (day pupils)	£17,000
Telephone number	020 8689 7676
Website	<a href="http://www.the-write-time.org">www.the-write-time.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@the-write-time.org">office@the-write-time.org</a>

## Information about this school

- The Write Time is a small independent day school in the London borough of Croydon.
- It provides alternative provision for pupils who are typically excluded from school or referred from pupil referral units in local authorities in the vicinity.
- Most pupils are on short-term placements and are dual-registered.
- All pupils experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Many pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use off-site training.
- This is the school's first full inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning alongside the deputy headteacher in all timetabled subjects.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their learning, behaviour and well-being.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and attendance.
- The inspector considered the three contributions to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. He also met with a parent and spoke with a parent by telephone.
- The inspector had several meetings with the school's leadership team. He also met with all teaching staff and considered seven staff questionnaires.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with three people responsible for placing pupils at the school and the local authority's designated officer.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including school policies, logs, evidence of staff training and information related to safeguarding and health and safety.
- The inspector also toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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