

# Whitefield School

Claremont Road, Cricklewood, London NW2 1TR

## Inspection dates

28 November–7 December 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- School leaders, governors and staff have created a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where pupils thrive.
- Whitefield's ethos of 'live, learn, aspire, achieve' permeates the work of the school. Pupils, irrespective of when they start at the school, are welcomed warmly and supported to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their diverse community. They are highly supportive of each other and celebrate differences, and pupils new to the school are quickly integrated.
- Pupils' conduct is of a very high standard. They attend regularly, work hard and are eager to learn. They value and enjoy the full range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them.
- Leaders have created a culture that effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, so that they are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers know pupils well and plan learning activities carefully to ensure that there will be sufficient support and challenge. The 'Whitefield lesson' has raised expectations.
- The curriculum offers a range of appropriate academic and work-related courses to meet the diverse needs of pupils. Pupils choose pathways based on their prior ability and experience.
- The majority of pupils make strong progress from their starting points, particularly in English and mathematics. However, this is not the case across all subjects.
- Some groups of pupils, while making very good progress, do not make as much progress as others at the school. These include the most able and some who arrive with low starting points.
- Individualised 16 to 19 study programmes ensure that students make good progress, especially on work-related courses. High aspirations ensure that all students progress on to university, apprenticeships or employment.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and staff are well trained. Support for pupils' complex needs is effectively tailored. However, some record-keeping, particularly around staff references, lacks strategic overview.

## Full report

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

- Leaders and governors should ensure that:
  - the strong progress pupils make in subjects such as English is replicated across all subjects
  - initiatives to support the progress of the most able pupils, disadvantaged and those pupils with low starting points are strategically planned and the impact of actions regularly checked
  - improvements in the sixth form continue to have a priority so that more pupils successfully continue their studies at Whitefield School
  - checks on some record-keeping, particularly around staff references, are more systematic.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, school leaders and governors are proud of the aspirational school they have created, where all pupils are welcome. Leaders have cultivated an ethos where pupils feel genuinely supported by staff to achieve highly. As one pupil typically said: 'Teachers are prepared to go above and beyond, giving up their spare time to help us.' The school's motto, 'live, learn, aspire, achieve', permeates the life of the school.
- Pupils arrive regularly throughout the year with a range of academic ability, experience and language skills. Leaders ensure that induction for these pupils is thorough and effective. Assessments determine the level of support necessary to ensure that each pupil is seamlessly integrated into the life of the school. As a result, pupils quickly embrace the 'Whitefield way' and make good progress from their starting points.
- While many middle and senior leaders are new in post, they have already become a cohesive team. They have clear roles and responsibilities, linked closely to the school development plan. Leaders are unanimously committed and enthusiastic. Together with the headteacher and governors, they have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and priorities for further improvements.
- Leaders have implemented a comprehensive system to support staff development. Leaders know the strengths and expertise of the staff they line manage. Consequently, they are able to offer constructive support and challenge. Staff are encouraged to identify key areas for development and they receive appropriate training. Those new to teaching are given mentors to support them through the initial stages and opportunities to gain whole-school leadership experiences. Consequently, leaders have created a community where staff are keen to learn and develop new skills.
- The curriculum is deliberately broad to ensure that pathways are, as one leader said: 'driven by the needs of the pupils'. Pupils choose from a range of work-related and academic subjects, some of which are taught successfully in mixed-age groups to ensure the breadth of options available. Leaders are dedicated to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of their academic ability, school experience or background. Consequently, courses with appropriate accreditation are available for those who are not yet ready to study for a full GCSE qualification.
- Equally, leaders are fully committed to providing opportunities for pupils to learn new skills and enjoy new experiences. The MISST programme ensures that all Year 7 pupils learn a musical instrument. Equine therapy supports pupils' emotional and social development. Excellent school facilities encourage pupils' participation in sports, dance and drama. Regular cultural visits and trips ensure that no pupil is prevented from experiencing the wealth of opportunities available in the capital city. The annual trip to the pantomime is a particular highlight for both staff and pupils.
- The promotion of British values is integral to the life of the school. Leaders are proud of the diverse pupil population and instigate opportunities to celebrate differences and encourage pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Special events are organised throughout the year, including interfaith conferences, family festivals, a diversity week and the celebration of religious festivals. Events such as Remembrance Day and Black History Month, plus assemblies and 'drop down' days celebrate and

explore what it means to be British. Pupils are encouraged to support causes in the local community. During the inspection, for instance, pupils in Year 10 organised the annual senior citizens' tea party.

- Some pupils attend alternative provision. Leaders keep a careful track of the progress these pupils make to ensure that it is of the same good standard as that of other pupils in the school. They receive regular updates to ensure that these pupils attend regularly and behave consistently well.
- Leaders work collaboratively and effectively with the local authority and other local schools to ensure that staff are well trained, share best practice and provide the best opportunities for their pupils. For instance, they have recently become involved in the 'Resilient Schools Programme', which works closely with schools, pupils and their families to ensure that they have the right attitudes to learning. They are also part of the informal SNAP federation with local primary schools. This allows teachers across the key stages to share their expertise.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the support they receive from the school and the progress their children make. As one parent said: 'The school has done everything to ensure pupils learn and make progress so that they achieve the best results.'
- Funding to support those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively. The coordinator for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, their team and other school leaders have undertaken accurate assessments of each pupil in this group and monitor their progress carefully. Pupils have individual learning plans and staff receive specific strategies to support particular pupils. Leaders regularly check through looking at these pupils' books that enough is being done to secure good progress. Equally, regular staff training ensures that teachers are confident in meeting these pupils' needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally and attend regularly. Leaders have instigated a range of initiatives to support this large group of pupils and they carefully track the progress this group make. However, they do not routinely evaluate the impact of particular strategies to ensure that they are making the most effective use of the funding.
- Leaders have prioritised ensuring that the very strong progress pupils make in subjects such as English is replicated across all subjects. They have recently implemented the 'Whitefield lesson' in an attempt to build on the good practice, raise teachers' expectations and ensure a more consistent approach to teaching and learning. This has already proved successful as demonstrated by the progress seen in pupils' books. However, leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done in some subject areas, for instance science. Recruitment and retention have proved problematic in some areas. Recent appointments have brought further stability to some subject areas, which is already having a positive impact.
- Leaders carefully track the progress pupils make. They know that many pupils make very good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. However, they have identified that some groups, particularly the most able and those with very low starting points, while they do better than all pupils nationally, do not make the same strong progress as other pupils at the school. This is now a whole-school priority.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are experienced professionals, with a good knowledge of current educational policy. They are proud of the school's successes and the improved reputation the school now has in the local community. They are particularly proud of how open the school is to welcoming all pupils, irrespective of their experiences, backgrounds, ability or complex needs.
- They have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and are clear that some areas require further development, including the sixth form. They are highly ambitious for pupils and the wider school community.
- Governors understand the complexities of the pupils who arrive with no key stage 2 data, and the baseline assessments necessary to ensure that their progress is tracked carefully. They receive regular information from school leaders on the progress different groups of pupils make, and clearly challenge them when certain groups fall below the high expectations demanded.
- Governors ensure that the school is financially stable and that they manage effectively the performance of staff. They have ensured that the ageing building is maintained appropriately and creatively to make it an enjoyable learning environment. They are proactive in seeking further additions, such as the new project to create a centre for pupils with autism on the site. Governors accept that the oversight of some record-keeping, particularly around staff references, needs to be more strategic.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.
- Staff have received regular up-to-date safeguarding training, including issues to do with the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, they are clear about their statutory responsibility to help to keep pupils safe, and are proactive in identifying signs of potential issues such as female genital mutilation. Staff are aware of the potential risks faced by pupils in the community, including gang affiliation, child sexual exploitation and knife crime. They are vigilant and know the procedures for passing on concerns. A well-trained student services team ensures that complex issues are dealt with quickly by the relevant external agencies so that pupils get timely help. They meet regularly to ensure that actions are appropriate and timely.
- Pupils receive appropriate information on how they can keep themselves safe. Leaders provide helpful advice and guidance through the personal, social and health education programme and tutor time. Staff regularly share information on how to stay safe online with parents and pupils. External providers deliver a range of workshops for pupils on issues such as gang affiliation, fundamental British Values, knife crime and preventing discrimination.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school met statutory requirements by the end of the inspection. However, school leaders had not checked carefully enough that record-keeping around staff references was up to date and comprehensive.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Strong relationships between pupils and teachers ensure that there is regular dialogue about how pupils can improve their work. The 'STA' system, where collaboratively 'strength, target and action' are identified, is used consistently across subjects. Evidence in pupils' books showed that this system helps them to make good progress over time. As one pupil said: 'Teachers are really open and they will help you with anything.' Another pupil noted: 'This school is excellent, and people are very welcoming.'
- Pupils are committed to their work and enjoy learning. They work well together, are curious about what they are studying and keen to ask questions. They respect the fact that some of their classmates may have gaps in their learning or are at the early stages of learning English. They routinely support each other and, consequently, have established a very safe learning environment. Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to achieve well.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use the school's excellent resources well. Regular opportunities for them to share good practice ensures that there is ongoing dialogue about high-quality teaching. Pupils are encouraged to solve problems and explore their learning through creative and practical activities that meet individual needs. They are given opportunities to reflect and reminders about the importance of communicating effectively both orally and in writing.
- Initial pupil assessments are used by teachers to ensure that activities are tailored to individual needs. Staff from the English as an additional language department and those who support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities provide detailed guidance to staff on how best to support particular pupils. Consequently, strategies are in place to ensure that pupils, irrespective of their starting points, can quickly catch up or maintain their good progress. Teachers carefully track pupils' progress and quickly intervene as appropriate.
- Leaders have identified that, last year, the most able pupils and those with the lowest starting points did not make the same strong progress as other pupils within the school. Ensuring that the level of challenge is high enough for some and the level of support for others is effective is now a whole-school priority. As a result, teachers are mindful of the types of activities they ask pupils to undertake and the strategies they can employ to ensure that all pupils make strong progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders undertake initial assessments on all pupils who join the school, either at the start of the school year or at other times. These inform highly effective targeted support for those who need it, particularly those with the most complex needs. The school works with a range of external agencies to ensure that actions appropriately support individual pupils and their families. This excellent wrap-around care for families

ensures that pupils are able to attend school regularly and to be ready to learn.

- Diversity at this harmonious school is celebrated and respected. As a result, pupils mix very well and they consistently show respect and tolerance towards each other, staff and visitors. New arrivals are welcomed warmly and quickly integrate into the life of the school. Pupils socialise well together and are genuinely interested in their learning and supporting each other. Pupils understand that they should treasure each other's differences. Groups such as 'Spectrum', for instance, give LGBT pupils the opportunity to offer each other support. Prefects organise a popular 'kindness table' in the main dining hall, where pupils can write a 'kind message' anonymously that is delivered to the recipient during afternoon registration. Bullying is therefore exceptionally rare and when it does occur is dealt with very rapidly. As one pupil typically said: 'I really like this school because I was new last year and people are really friendly and I fit in well.'
- Pupils receive regular and impartial advice and guidance in preparation for the next stage of their education and training. Some leave at the end of Year 11 to pursue work-related or academic courses at local colleges. Others stay at the school to pursue their studies further, and leaders ensure that they provide courses that meet pupils' interests and aspirations.
- The school runs the unaccompanied asylum seeker programme for the local authority. Working closely with the local authority's virtual school for children looked after, leaders ensure that there is a six-week induction programme for children new to the country. Leaders ensure that they integrate these pupils quickly and effectively into the main school. Pupils across the school offer warmth, guidance and care to these new arrivals.
- The personal, social and health education programme is promoted through the planned curriculum and during drop down days and assemblies. Leaders are proud of the quality of food available for pupils and how effectively healthy lifestyles are encouraged.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct around the school and in lessons is of the highest standard. The atmosphere is calm and quiet across the large site. In lessons, pupils enthusiastically engage in the task at hand, working collaboratively with others and listening carefully to each other's views.
- Staff show respect towards the pupils in their care and this is reciprocated. These positive relationships mean that in lessons, around the school site, and on trips and activities, pupils consistently demonstrate excellent behaviour. The school has received considerable praise from external providers for the behaviour of its pupils and this was seen clearly during the inspection.
- Leaders have implemented effective systems to improve pupils' attendance. A rewards system has proved popular with pupils and the benefits of regular attendance are promoted during assemblies and tutor times. As a result, attendance has improved, particularly for disadvantaged pupils over the last two years, and is now in line with the national average.

- Pupils arrive in Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below the national average. Many arrive throughout key stage 3 and key stage 4, almost a third without prior attainment information.
- In 2017, across a number of subjects, pupils overall made progress in line with all pupils of a similar prior attainment level nationally. Pupils made very good progress in English and above the national average in mathematics. However, pupils made less progress in science and some humanities subjects.
- The most able pupils on entry and those with low prior attainment made less progress than all pupils did nationally across a range of subjects in 2017.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made progress broadly in line with pupils nationally across a range of subjects. They made progress above the equivalent national average for other pupils in English and mathematics. However, they made much less progress within the English Baccalaureate subjects, particularly science, than pupils did nationally.
- At the end of Year 11 in 2016 and 2017, pupils from different starting points attained slightly lower in their GCSE examinations than pupils did nationally across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made from their starting points was lower than the national progress score across a range of subjects in 2017. This is a large group of pupils with diverse needs. As a result of an increased whole-school focus this year, assessments show that these pupils now make good progress from their starting points. This is equally true of the large number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Targeted support, explicit teaching strategies and individualised learning plans mean that these pupils make good progress over time.
- Senior leaders and the literacy lead have prioritised improving literacy. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure, and visits to the library and special reading events promote independent reading. Teachers encourage pupils to gain confidence in reading aloud in class. Those who find reading more challenging undergo intensive reading support programmes. Pupils learn to write at length and experiment with challenging and subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, progress in English and other subjects is strong.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leaders provide a comprehensive range of 16 to 19 study programmes that meet the individual needs of students. A wide range of aspirational work experience, trips, visits and activities complement this. As in other parts of the school, leaders are committed to ensuring that students' personal, social and employability skills are developed and that they have the same opportunities as other students nationally, irrespective of their backgrounds. Students who arrived at the school late on in their studies, or who did not achieve expected outcomes are able to study level 2 courses in English and mathematics. Leaders ensure that all programmes are tailored to particular needs.
- Students are highly motivated, work hard and are aspirational for their future



employment. They receive good careers guidance, which helps them to prepare effectively for the next stage of their education and training. Some leave at the end of Year 12 to pursue vocational courses at local colleges. At the end of June 2017, all Year 13 students went on to pursue courses at university or college, begin an apprenticeship or commence employment. Leaders are proud of the achievements of their post-16 students. They promote their successes and destinations after leaving school around the school to inspire younger pupils.

- The sixth form is a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment. Students show high levels of respect and tolerance towards each other and staff. New students in the sixth form spoke of the warm and welcoming atmosphere, and how staff genuinely want them to achieve well and support them to do so.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting activities that challenge and build on students' prior learning. Consequently, students make good progress from their starting points, particularly on work-related courses. Leaders acknowledge, however, that there is still some inconsistency in the extent of the progress students make on some courses. This is being addressed.
- The sixth form benefits from being a small learning community where every student is known well. Leaders know that the sixth form needs to develop further, in order for them to offer more opportunities for Whitefield pupils. They have an accurate understanding of the areas that require further development, and plans are in place to publicise the benefits of the sixth form more effectively to key stage 4 pupils.

## School details

Unique reference number	137361
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10036347

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	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	792
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	121
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Dr Mike Page
Headteacher	Elizabeth Rymer
Telephone number	020 8455 4114
Website	<a href="http://www.whitefield.barnet.sch.uk">www.whitefield.barnet.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@whitefield.barnet.sch.uk">admin@whitefield.barnet.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2014

## Information about this school

- Whitefield School is a smaller than average-sized academy converter school.
- Over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is higher than the national average. The largest groups are those who are Black African, 'Any other White background' and 'Any other ethnic group'.
- Over two-thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above

average.

- The proportion of students who receive SEN support is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- Pupils' attainment on entry is significantly below the national average.
- Just over a third of pupils have no prior data.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is a member of SNAP, a group of local primary and secondary schools
- Some pupils attend alternative provision at Barnet Youth Services (Canada Villa), First Rung, Northgate Hospital School, Barnet and Southgate College, College of North West London and the Pavilion Centre.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was in two parts. Following a one-day short inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, a full two-day inspection visit took place the following week to undertake a section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across a number of year groups and subjects. They watched an assembly, visited tutor groups and listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors held discussions with representatives from the governing body and the local authority. They spoke to the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and a range of staff, pupils and students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to Parent View, 40 responses to the staff survey and 51 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including records related to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment system.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and policies and procedures, including referrals to external agencies.

## Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Phillip Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Heidi Swidenbank	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Murray-Hudson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Bonelli	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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