

The Write Time

14 Willis Road, London CR0 2XX

Inspection dates

17–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are committed to providing high-quality provision for pupils unable to be educated in mainstream schools and pupil referral units.
- A dedicated team of staff helps pupils overcome difficulties. This is so that they can gain the qualifications and skills they need to move on to the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Leaders and staff work hard to gain the trust of pupils, parents and carers. They make sure that the school’s family ethos extends to all members of the school community.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers monitor pupils’ progress from their different starting points and know exactly what each pupil needs to do to improve.
- The attendance of most pupils improves as they re-engage in their learning. However, poor punctuality for some pupils means that they often miss the start of the school day and parts of lessons.
- Teachers adapt lesson activities so that all pupils can access the learning. They work closely with support staff to ensure that pupils’ individual needs are understood and met.
- Most pupils achieve qualifications in English, mathematics and science during their time at the school. Pupils study a range of subjects, including employability and creative arts. More vocational courses would broaden the curriculum offer to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good. Pupils often join the school with very negative attitudes towards learning. Leaders and staff use their specialist training and expertise to help pupils to understand and resolve behavioural issues in a positive way.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff know pupils extremely well and are vigilant to any welfare concerns.
- Pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills improve during their time at school. However, pupils would benefit from more opportunities and resources to develop their reading skills.

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?

- Extend the curriculum to include more vocational courses.
- Develop pupils' literacy skills further by providing more opportunities to read.
- Improve levels of punctuality so that pupils do not miss out on valuable learning time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- At the heart of the school's success is the commitment and care of leaders and staff. They are dedicated to making a difference to the lives of their pupils and giving them a chance to succeed.
- The school has a strong sense of community. Pupils, parents and staff speak of the family ethos that leaders have worked hard to create. Parents and referrers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They speak very highly of the positive difference the school has made for its pupils.
- Leaders are realistic and honest about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They review their actions rigorously and change their approach if they do not see the necessary improvements. Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards continue to be met.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. They have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve and improved pupils' outcomes, as a result. For example, pupils now start working towards accredited courses as soon as they join the school. Leaders ensure that pupils get the most out of their time at the school.
- Teaching staff said they are well supported by leaders and enjoy working at the school. They have received specific training, such as for behaviour management and the 'Choice Theory' model adopted by the school. Staff development is ongoing, and teachers value the 'hands on' approach from school leaders. Leaders have further plans to increase teachers' opportunities to develop their teaching skills and share good practice, especially when teaching their non-specialist subjects.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that meets the needs of their pupils. Each pupil is carefully assessed when they join the school. This means that members of staff are clear about any gaps in their learning. Pupils follow a pathway that gives them accreditation in the skills they need to access further education, training or employment. While the curriculum is suitably broad, more vocational courses would suit pupils' needs and interests.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Pupils spoke positively about trips they have made to local places of interest. Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the curriculum. Pupils have class discussions and lessons on issues such as gender identity, the effects of plastic on the environment and the laws on consent.

Governance

- The newly formed governing body strengthens the leadership team. Governors bring relevant expertise and experience which help them to support and challenge school leaders effectively.
- Governors visit the school regularly to review aspects of the school's effectiveness. School leaders report to governors every term. The governing body uses this information to evaluate the quality of the provision and set targets for improvement. Governors

understand and meet their statutory requirements for safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are vigilant about safeguarding. They know each pupil well and can quickly spot any changes in behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Leaders and staff have established strong relationships with parents. They involve them to gain a full picture of each pupil's personal circumstances.
- Leaders take prompt and effective action to keep pupils safe, involving external agencies, as necessary. Leaders are meticulous in keeping detailed records of all incidents and concerns.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn about keeping themselves safe through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, assemblies and external visitors. Leaders are fully aware of the local risks to their pupils, such as knife crime, gang violence and county lines. They teach pupils how to avoid getting involved in dangerous situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Strong relationships between pupils and teaching staff are at the core of the school's approach to teaching and learning. Teachers are very successful in gaining the trust and respect of pupils. As a result, lessons take place with minimal disruption.
- Teachers and support staff use a wide range of approaches and interventions to enable pupils to access and engage with learning. Pupils do not always join the school willing to learn. As a team, leaders, teachers and support staff identify and break down any barriers to learning so that pupils can make good progress.
- Members of staff have high expectations of what their pupils can do and achieve. They gather a wealth of information about each pupil when they join the school at different points in the year. This includes finding out about pupils' starting points in core subjects. Teachers use this to tailor work to individual needs and adapt their teaching styles as necessary.
- Teachers provide plenty of support and encouragement so that pupils feel confident to ask questions or request extra help. Teachers get pupils back on task quickly if they are distracted.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in their specialist and non-specialist subjects. They use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding and set work which is suitably challenging.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly strong. Teachers focus on making sure that any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions are identified and addressed. However, pupils do not routinely have opportunities to develop their reading skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils typically enjoy coming to school. For many of them, this is the most successful experience they have had in education. Pupils value the chance to learn in a small setting with plenty of individual support.
- Leaders and staff carefully track pupils' welfare, attendance and behaviour. This helps them to identify promptly any issues which could affect pupils' emotional well-being. They put in place targeted support and keep parents informed through regular updates.
- Members of staff know each pupil's individual circumstances and needs. In many cases, it takes staff time to build up trust, but they invariably get there. Pupils talked very positively about the staff and the support they receive. Pupils' emotional and mental health is a high priority for the school, and this filters through to pupils.
- The atmosphere in school is one of mutual respect. Pupils understand the importance of tolerating and respecting differences. They have a good understanding of bullying and say that teachers 'are on to it' quickly.
- High levels of staff supervision ensure that pupils feel safe at all times in school. Staff engage with pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes, playing games together or chatting quietly with individuals.
- All pupils take part in physical education. Currently, pupils enjoy weekly sessions at a local boxing club.
- The school prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Pupils learn employability skills, and about different careers and courses. They appreciate how much the school does to help them secure college courses.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils improve their behaviour during their time at the school. Staff celebrate pupils' individual achievements, and pupils respond well to this. They respect the school rules and know that they must adhere to them. As a result, the school is a calm environment and pupils are motivated to try hard.
- Staff are well trained in dealing with the challenging and complex needs of pupils. If there is any disruption, they manage it swiftly and effectively. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on issues around poor behaviours, and help them to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Attendance is good. Most pupils arrive with a history of poor attendance in their previous schools. Leaders are clear about their expectations of attendance and use a range of approaches to help pupils attend regularly. The majority of pupils have improved their attendance significantly since attending the school, including those who used to be school refusers.
- Punctuality is poor for some pupils. They often miss the start of the school day, when leaders and staff set the tone. They also miss valuable learning time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current assessment information and work in books show that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects from their different starting points. Progress is particularly strong in English and mathematics.
- Many pupils have significant gaps in their learning due to spending time out of school. Personalised pathways for learning help to ensure that pupils' work is well matched to their needs. Pupils often make strong gains in their learning as a result.
- So far this year, every Year 11 pupil has achieved a functional skills qualification in English and mathematics. Most of these pupils have also taken GCSEs in mathematics, English language and literature, and combined science. Last year, all pupils secured places on college courses, and current Year 11 pupils have been equally successful.
- Leaders know that pupils may only attend the school for a short period of time. They make sure that pupils work towards relevant and useful qualifications. The majority of Year 10 pupils have achieved accreditations this year.
- Pupils also complete Arts Award courses as part of the curriculum. Many have successfully completed level 1 and are working towards level 2.

School details

Unique reference number	142621
DfE registration number	306/6016
Inspection number	10092532

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	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Chris Murray
Chair	Chris Murray
Headteacher	Alton McDonald
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,700
Telephone number	020 8689 7676
Website	www.the-write-time.org
Email address	sammurray@thewritetime.org
Date of previous inspection	7–9 November 2017

Information about this school

- The Write Time is a small independent day school in the London Borough of Croydon.
- The school provides full-time and part-time alternative provision for pupils who are typically excluded from school or referred from pupil referral units in the vicinity.
- The school offers a respite service to schools, providing short-term places for pupils with behavioural needs. The school does not use off-site provision.
- Many pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, support staff, the proprietor and chair of governors, a governor and the quality assurance manager. The inspector spoke with two referrers to the school, from the local authority and a nearby school.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils to discuss their learning and hear their views about the school.
- The inspector visited lessons across a range of subjects and reviewed pupils' work in books and folders, looking at progress over time.
- The inspector reviewed documentation provided by the school, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, development plans and school policies. The inspector also examined records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys. The inspector considered feedback letters sent in by five parents.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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.

Parent View

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 2019