

Inspection of Wize Up

579 Westhorne Avenue, Eltham, London SE9 6DN

Inspection dates: 14–16 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils start here on either short- or long-term placements. Many have been out of school for a long time. Each pupil is treated as an individual. Everyone works together to make sure pupils' physical and emotional well-being come first. Pupils feel listened to and are well looked after.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' personal development. Leaders provide effective one-to-one support and therapy that help pupils to improve their behaviour and social skills.

Most pupils behave well and staff deal with any disruption calmly. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including in relation to bullying and its consequences. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly.

Pupils succeed at Wize Up. Many go back to mainstream school. Others stay and go on to achieve qualifications that prepare them for their future lives. Those who stay are fully supported in finding the right courses for when they leave school.

Leaders design a broad curriculum to meet individual needs. However, it could include more activities and courses that would help pupils to fully develop their talents and interests. In some subjects, planning and teaching could be adapted more successfully to help pupils remember their previous learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They ensure that pupils have the right support and a personal approach to help them succeed. Everyone has a focus on 'breaking down barriers' and helping pupils to have a fresh start. Other schools and local authority staff that work with Wize Up speak highly about how well the school helps pupils to achieve.

Pupils often join the school at different times during the year. Leaders find out what pupils know and what they do not. They use this information to create a curriculum package for each pupil. Leaders prepare individual learning plans. These include specific information about pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most teachers use these effectively to meet pupils' needs. Teaching assistants work well with pupils to help them learn.

Pupils learn a range of subjects, including citizenship and information technology, to complement their English, mathematics and science. Leaders are working to improve the curriculum, for example by introducing new arts-related subjects and having more clubs.

Leaders make sure subjects are well resourced. Teachers have what they need to teach their subjects, so that, for example, pupils can complete practical work in

science. Leaders are beginning to work with mainstream schools to improve their curriculum, such as using their science laboratories and taking part in staff training.

Leaders have ensured that appropriate plans are in place for most subjects. Teachers think about how to plan and sequence what pupils will learn. They share their short-term plans with pupils. This is to help pupils remember what they have learned before. Some of these plans are not well developed, for example in science and information technology. They lack detail about the vocabulary and concepts that teachers want pupils to know and remember. As a result, these are not as helpful to pupils as they could be.

Most pupils' behaviour and attendance improve during their time at the school. Most staff nip any disruption in the bud quickly to prevent small issues from becoming more serious. As a result, pupils learn to stay focused and to take responsibility for their behaviour and actions.

Pupils benefit from lots of advice and guidance about possible careers. They are well supported in preparing for life after school. During their time at the school, pupils make strong gains in both their studies and personal development.

Leaders check attendance well and work with external agencies when further action is needed. However, pupils' punctuality at the beginning of the school day is not high enough. As a result, some miss out on topical discussions and reading activities.

Pupils learn a great deal about life in modern Britain, and other religions and beliefs. Staff, during citizenship and religious education, encourage pupils to form their own opinions. They also help pupils to listen to each other's viewpoints. This includes when discussing topics such as sex before marriage. Pupils also go on different trips, for example to the Houses of Parliament and Royal Courts of Justice.

The management committee of the school has new members since the previous inspection. This includes a new chair of the committee. Currently, members offer more support than they do challenge. They have not had the range of training needed to help them to know how to hold school leaders fully to account.

Leaders have made sure that all the independent school standards are met. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The safeguarding policy is on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that they find out about pupils' needs and personal circumstances before they start their placement. Leaders work with and share information with external agencies quickly when they have a safeguarding concern.

Leaders rightly put a huge emphasis on the safeguarding curriculum. In personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), pupils learn, in an age-appropriate way, about risks to their health and well-being. This includes joy-riding, exploitation, and alcohol and drugs misuse. Leaders make sure that pupils hear from guest speakers who address issues such as extremism, gang affiliation and knife crime. All this work combines to make sure that pupils learn about how to look after themselves, including on their journey to and from school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have ambition for the curriculum and keep it under review. They have identified that opportunities for pupils to be creative are too limited. As a result, pupils do not fully nurture and exploit their talents and interests to the full. Leaders should follow through with their plans to widen the curriculum offer further, including additional clubs and activities.
- While teachers have long-term plans and schemes of work in place, some short-term plans (which teachers share with pupils) lack depth. They do not make clear the range of subject terminology and knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, they are not useful enough for pupils. Leaders need to make sure that all short-term plans are well planned. They should also make sure that all teachers use them to help their pupils go back and remember their previous learning.
- Pupils' punctuality at the beginning of the school day is not high enough. Some pupils do not benefit from the topical discussions, debate and coverage of current affairs that take place at the beginning of the day. Leaders need to do more to ensure that pupils arrive by the expected time of 9.10am.
- The management committee has recently undergone significant change with new members, including a new chair. Members have not been as challenging to school leaders as they should be. There needs to be a suitable training programme, particularly for the chair. This is to ensure that all have the knowledge and skills to challenge leaders more on the impact of their work.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	136092
DfE registration number	203/6040
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10122986
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Proprietor	Lorretta Boyd
Chair	Andrew Carnegie
Headteacher	Lorretta Boyd
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,575 - £18,525
Telephone number	0208 859 9664
Website	www.wize-up.org.uk
Email address	info@wize-up.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–19 October 2017

Information about this school

- Wize Up is a small independent school. It provides alternative provision for pupils, including those who have been excluded from or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. Placements at the school can be both short- and long-term. Many pupils have been out of education for a long time before starting at the school. Pupils are dual registered if they come from mainstream schools.
- All pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A small number have education, health and care plans for their SEND.
- The school uses Flower Skills and Training in Charlton, where pupils can access courses for one day a week.
- The school's previous inspection was in October 2017, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with a range of senior staff during the inspection, including the headteacher, the chair of the management committee and other school staff.
- We met with teachers, support staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, citizenship and science. We visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and reviewed pupils' work.
- We spoke with leaders from schools who refer pupils to Wize Up. We also spoke with staff from a local authority that works with the school, including those who work with pupils with SEND.
- We also spoke with parents and carers and reviewed Ofsted's surveys for staff, parents and pupils. We reviewed the school's own surveys of parent and carer views.
- We carried out a range of activities to look at safeguarding. These activities included talking to leaders, staff and pupils. We reviewed a range of school documents and records.
- We visited other lessons from across the curriculum and reviewed a range of subject plans and pupils' work.
- We toured the premises and reviewed additional information in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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