

Inspection of a good school: Joseph Clarke School

Vincent Road, London E4 9PP

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

Outcome

Joseph Clarke School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

An enthusiastic, friendly and hardworking ethos pervades this school community. Pupils look forward to coming to school. They cooperate well and are nearly always kind to each other. They are particularly courteous to adults and to visitors.

Staff are skilled in using what they know about pupils to support them when they find aspects of life challenging. Pupils trust that adults will help them. They are confident that staff have their best interests in mind. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn, where pupils do not have any concerns about bullying or the behaviour of others.

Many parents and carers used words such as 'amazing' to describe the support their children receive. They value the commitment of leaders and staff in helping their children to succeed.

There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience and character. These include links with local businesses, enterprise opportunities and residential visits, as well as regular time spent in the local community. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for the most-able pupils, so that they can succeed and do well. Pupils with more complex needs work towards short term goals taken from their education, health and care (EHC) plans. This means that it is not clear how these pupils will be helped to work towards long-term curriculum goals.

Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable about the pupils they teach. Many of them have specialist qualifications. Lessons are delivered skilfully by teachers, who are passionate about supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Low-level disruption rarely gets in the way of learning.

The school uses assessment well. Leaders carry out baseline assessments of pupils' needs and abilities. These provide detailed information that leaders pass on to staff in the form of learning and behaviour support plans.

Staff have implemented a revised reading and phonics curriculum. This has been adapted for pupils with visual impairment. As a result, pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read are developing their phonics skills and reading fluency.

The use of practical equipment to support pupils' learning and development is well established in the school. Pupils are confident in their use of apparatus to record their work and support their learning. Despite their severe visual impairments, several pupils told inspectors how they have been supported in learning how to use local transport or navigate their way around the school.

The early years class gives children an excellent start. The provision is very well managed, and the strong partnership between teachers and support staff enables children to settle well and enjoy a wide range of activities. This includes work on pre-Braille skills.

Secondary mathematics lessons focus on preparation for external examinations. This means that teaching does not consistently provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.

In the secondary and post-16 department, pupils are prepared well for their transition to the next stage of their education. The school has strong mainstream links, and some pupils are supported to attend the mainstream school to develop their independence further in a different setting. A small number of pupils follow A-level courses, helping them to fulfil their aim of moving on to higher education.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Work to improve pupils' resilience and develop their character, confidence and self-esteem is deeply embedded. There is an emphasis on preparing pupils for their next steps and for adulthood. Parents are full of praise for how the school has helped their children to thrive academically and personally.

However, pupils who are non-verbal are not always provided with suitable communication systems. This means that some pupils are sometimes reliant on verbal instruction in lessons and have no means of expressing themselves to others.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They receive extensive professional development and are appreciative of this. They feel that they have the support of school leaders and that the school is well managed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the work of the school. Those responsible for leading safeguarding are quick to act, involving other agencies when it is appropriate. Leaders keep accurate records of any safeguarding issues.

Staff are alert to each pupil's needs. They quickly spot any sign that suggests a pupil may be suffering from harm or neglect. Staff know the right procedures to follow to make sure that pupils are kept safe.

Pupils learn to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For pupils with the most complex needs, leaders have not set out precisely what pupils should learn and in what order. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum is in place across the school that meets the needs of these pupils and enables them to succeed in a broad range of areas.
- In mathematics, even for younger pupils, too much emphasis is placed on practising for examinations. This means that pupils lack sufficient opportunities to both deepen understanding, and to connect skills to real life settings. Leaders should implement a mathematics curriculum that is logically sequenced, so that pupils know and remember more over time.
- A small number of pupils are non-verbal and do not have a consistent communication system in place. Where offered, systems tend to be limited to practical activities, such as going to the toilet or asking for a snack. This means that some pupils are reliant on verbal instruction in lessons, and have no means of telling staff what they have learned. Leaders should make sure that all pupils are equipped to express what they want to say, when they want to say it.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140197
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10211471
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	2 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert Turner
Principal	Chadia Filali-Moutei
Website	www.whitefieldacademytrust.org.uk/jc
Date of previous inspection	21 to 22 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with visual impairment and/or autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal and other leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders.
- The lead inspector held a virtual meeting with three trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art, and science. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. Responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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 child-care 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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022