

# Inspection of a good school: Whitefield School

Claremont Road, Cricklewood, London NW2 1TR

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2022

## Outcome

Whitefield School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe at this school and are well motivated to learn. They appreciate and understand the new behaviour system. This means that their learning is not disrupted. Pupils build effective working relationships with staff and peers alike. The large number of pupils who arrive other than at the start of the year are welcomed warmly into the school community. Incidents of bullying are rare. Teachers respond to any concerns that pupils have swiftly and effectively. Pupils value that their voices are heard.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning. A carefully considered curriculum helps pupils to realise this vision. Teachers ensure that subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge are clearly emphasised over time. This means that the majority of pupils learn well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including in the specialist provision, are typically well supported to access the curriculum. However, the impact of the extra support that these pupils receive is not routinely evaluated by leaders.

Pupils enjoy a rich range of visits and activities that aim to further enhance their learning. For example, pupils studying French enjoy having the opportunity to visit Paris. Similarly, all pupils in key stage 3 learn to play a musical instrument. Leaders provide pupils with leadership opportunities. For example, pupils can become house captains, and students in the sixth form support younger pupils with their learning.

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

The curriculum matches the ambition and scope of what is expected nationally. It is carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils build up their knowledge cumulatively over time. For example, pupils can talk in detail about the texts that they have studied in English. This helps them to compare and contrast works of literature from different times, places and genres. Leaders have designed the curriculum to be culturally relevant to pupils. For example, there is a focus on diversity in history. This has led to a new sixth-form topic on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge in the areas that they teach. They present ideas clearly and check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. Any misconceptions are typically identified and addressed. This ensures that pupils deepen their understanding and are well prepared to tackle more complex ideas.

Pupils with SEND and those at the earliest stages of speaking English as an additional language are swiftly identified and supported. Staff receive the training that they need to help these pupils to access the full curriculum. In most lessons, pupils with SEND are well supported. However, there are times when the activities chosen do not give these pupils sufficient opportunity to practise and deepen their knowledge and understanding.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' reading. Curriculum plans identify opportunities for reading practice. A programme is in place to identify those who may need more help. These pupils receive additional support, and this ensures that most read with increasing accuracy, fluency and confidence.

Pupils who attend the specialist SEND provision receive a range of extra support. This typically helps them to access the same curriculum as other pupils. However, the impact of the support is not consistently evaluated by leaders. This means that, for some pupils, the extra help provided, including for weaker readers, is not tightly focused on their specific needs. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to address the issue.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well in lessons. Around the school, pupils are polite and considerate. They are welcoming to each other and to visitors. Leaders intervene quickly if their high expectations of behaviour are not met.

The curriculum has been well designed to support pupils' personal development. Important themes such as physical and mental well-being are prioritised. A programme of external visitors highlights different career pathways to pupils. Pupils are also supported with preparing for their next steps in a variety of other ways. For example, they receive mock interview practice, led by school governors and other professionals. This helps pupils and students to be ready for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Staff are positive about the school's senior leaders. They enjoy working at the school and feel well supported to develop professionally. Staff are positive about the efforts made by leaders to manage workload and well-being effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular and ongoing training. This ensures that they recognise the importance of reporting any concerns that arise. Records show that leaders take swift action and liaise with a range of external agencies. They think carefully about the support that families need. The governing body plays a key role in auditing the culture of safeguarding.

The curriculum has been designed to help pupils understand how to stay safe. For example, pupils learn about important themes, including consent and online safety.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders do not sharply evaluate the impact of additional support for pupils with SEND and those who are weaker readers. This means that the support provided for some of these pupils is not tailored as carefully as it could be to their specific needs. Leaders must ensure that they evaluate the design, implementation and impact of this support so that these pupils develop the knowledge and understanding they need to make strong progress through the curriculum.

## **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 November 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 137361   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Barnet   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10250723   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Secondary<br>Comprehensive   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 11 to 18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 758  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 160  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | Nicole Richer  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Chris Hunt   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.whitefield.barnet.sch.uk/">www.whitefield.barnet.sch.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 22 and 23 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005               |

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school has a specialist SEND resource base for 28 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers.

## 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body, including

the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history and modern foreign languages. They met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The curriculum in other subjects was considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors checked procedures for recruiting new members of staff. They also met with leaders to discuss how they put safeguarding policies into practice.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff through discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Hannah Glossop, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alice Clay

His Majesty's Inspector

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