

Inspection of Whitefriars School

Whitefriars Avenue, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 5RQ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Pritam Vekaria. This school is part of Heathland Whitefriars Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Lynne Malzard.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 five years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this calm, inclusive school. There has been much change in the last 12 months. The new leadership team is clear in its ambition for the school and the standards it has set. The impact of the changes can be seen and felt in every area of the school. Staff expect pupils to do well, and pupils are learning to rise to this challenge.

This is a school where everyone is welcome and encouraged to do their best. There is a sense of community and belonging forged between the primary and secondary phases. When new pupils join, they are welcomed into the community. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe because there are systems in place to support them if any problems should arise. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils know staff will act swiftly to resolve it.

Pupils behave well in lessons and during unstructured times. They are given opportunities to develop their own leadership skills through the community group, who are working to improve the school and the local environment. They relish the opportunities to learn outside the classroom, for example by taking part in the primary 'mini-Duke of Edinburgh's Award' scheme.

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

The new leadership team has rightly focused on improving the curriculum. It recognises that over time, the curriculum has not been designed or implemented well enough to support pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across different subjects. Consequently, published outcomes for pupils, including in external examinations, have been low, and pupils have not been sufficiently prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders have made significant changes to ensure the planned curriculum matches the scope and ambition of what is expected nationally. In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn and when. Important ideas are well sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge over time. For example, in mathematics, there is a focus on securing calculation skills. This helps pupils to tackle more complex concepts as they move through the school. However, there are times when the tasks pupils are given do not match the ambition of the revised curriculum. This is more common in the secondary phase where the curriculum in some subjects is not as fully developed. In these instances, pupils do not build as secure knowledge and understanding over time.

In the primary phase, teachers use assessment effectively to check what pupils have learned. Appropriate time is given to practise and embed key ideas before new topics are introduced. In the secondary phase and sixth form, this is less secure. Assessment does not consistently match what the pupils are learning. Teachers are sometimes not able to identify and address important misconceptions; this limits some pupils' readiness to progress through the intended curriculum.

Children in early years, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get off to a strong start. The curriculum is well designed and provides children with a range of opportunities for learning and language development. Rich opportunities ensure children develop secure social and emotional skills. For example, there is a focus on routine, being patient, taking turns and self-regulation.

Pupils' early reading is prioritised. Staff have been well trained to use the school's chosen programme. Pupils' reading is checked so that any who fall behind are given extra support to catch up. Pupils read books which are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. This helps them to read with increasing accuracy and fluency. Most older pupils read confidently. Pupils who are new to the country and speak English as an additional language are given additional help to catch up with their peers.

Leaders have ensured there are effective systems in place to identify the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Information is communicated well with teachers. This enables them to adapt tasks and activities so that wherever possible, pupils access the same curriculum as their peers.

The new leadership team has introduced an effective behaviour strategy for the secondary phase. This builds on the well-established practice that is embedded in the primary phase. As a result, pupils understand the expectations of behaviour and routinely behave well in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Any incidents which do occur are dealt with swiftly by staff who feel well supported by leaders. The school has developed strong systems for supporting pupils who do not attend school regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving.

There is a strong focus on pupils' personal development. The curriculum has been designed to help pupils understand significant issues such as the importance of diversity and respect. There is a well-designed and extensive careers programme. This helps to ensure that pupils, including students in the sixth form, are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

The school is well led. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, understand the strengths of the school and have clear plans in place to secure further improvements. They have created an environment where staff are happy in their work and are fulsome in their praise of changes leaders have affected. Staff recognise the extensive initiatives in place to manage workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the knowledge pupils should learn and remember has not been as clearly identified. As a result, there is not a consistent focus on these concepts and assessment is not used precisely to check what pupils have learned. This means that misconceptions are not routinely identified or addressed which limits pupils' achievement in these subjects. The school should ensure that the knowledge pupils need to learn is clarified across the curriculum so that teaching and assessment can be more closely matched with what pupils should be learning.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141071
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10296651
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,514
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	112
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynne Malzard
Headteacher	Pritam Vekaria
Website	www.whitefriarsschool.net
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has opened a sixth-form provision since the previous inspection.
- The school makes use of one alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's

education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. The inspectors also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of directors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), mathematics, history, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including school development plans and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and by considering their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Amy Jackson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karyn Ray	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Lebrecht	Ofsted Inspector
Alex Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Smith	His Majesty's 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 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 <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 2024