



Whitefield Schools and Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103109
LEA Waltham Forest LEA
Inspection number 276846
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Macdonald Road
School category	Foundation		Walthamstow
Age range of pupils	3 to 19		London E17 4AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02085313426
Number on roll	297	Fax number	02085270907
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Tony Best
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Niels Chapman

Age group 3 to 19	Inspection dates 23 May 2006 - 24 May 2006	Inspection number 276846
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Whitefield Schools and Centre is an exceptionally large special educational provision comprising of three schools and a specialist higher education centre. Approximately 60% of its pupils are from Waltham Forest and the rest are from around 30 other London boroughs and the Home Counties. Pupils come from a wide range of home circumstances and there are significant groups of pupils from the Asian, Black British, African and Caribbean communities. Whitefield's pupils have a wide range of learning needs, many of which are common among young people who are: on the autistic spectrum, language impaired, hearing impaired, multi-sensory impaired, or delayed in their cognitive development. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Nearly 20% of pupils have English as an additional language. There are almost three times as many boys as girls currently on roll. The centre for professional development offers university-validated diploma and Masters level courses and attracts teachers from far afield as well as offering a high level of professional development and research to all staff in the school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Whitefield is a truly inclusive school that provides an outstanding education for all its pupils. The school judged its own effectiveness as outstanding and the inspectors agree. One parent wrote to say, 'The school is an exemplary and dynamic place and I do not know what we would have done without them. I give them ten out of ten'. The very experienced headteacher has an excellent vision of school improvement and a very clear understanding of the importance of 'Every Child Matters'. Leadership and management are of a high quality and all staff ensure pupils are sufficiently challenged to bring out the best in their learning. The quality of teaching and pupil support is consistently high across the school. As a result, all pupils enjoy their learning and make excellent progress and achievement, particularly with their personal development and communication skills. Children in the Foundation Stage make excellent progress in their personal development and communication, and together with other pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Overall, behaviour is excellent and pupils cannot wait to get to school to meet their friends. The curriculum effectively challenges and meets the needs and interests of all pupils. The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is excellent and one parent wrote, 'the school has turned things around for my son. They are caring and nothing is too much for them.' Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all the school does and are grateful for the support and training they themselves receive. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent as is their involvement in the community outside of the school.

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, for example, the development of the curriculum and the challenge that is offered to the more able pupils. Although, as the school has quite rightly assessed the development of information and communication technology (ICT), is still an area for improvement. School self-evaluation of its own performance is effective, and consequently it has an excellent capacity to continually improve. The school provides excellent value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school judges the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the 14-19 provision to be outstanding and the inspectors agree. The sixth form provides an excellent education. Pupils have good access to appropriate life-skill activities, work-related opportunities and accredited courses. They are very well prepared for life after school and their achievement and progress are excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

* ensure that ICT is consistently planned for in the classrooms and used to support pupils' learning and achievement across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils overall make outstanding progress throughout the school in relation to their challenging personal targets. This is as a result of the excellent teaching, care and guidance they receive. By the nature of their learning difficulties, pupils' standards of achievement are well below those of their mainstream peers. Pupils are assessed each year against pre-National Curriculum levels (P-levels) or National Curriculum levels, and this information is used in individual planning and whole school target setting. The excellent use of systematic assessment is a key factor in the progress made by pupils over time. Initial assessment of pupils in the Foundation Stage is used really effectively to ensure all pupils have their learning needs met in a relaxed, but purposeful play environment. They quickly settle into the daily routines of school life and start to flourish. There is an imaginative curriculum and programme of therapy that effectively meets the individual needs of different groups of pupils and as a result, pupils achieve very well. The school closely monitors, records and analyses pupil data to identify any group of pupils not making the expected progress. The performance of 'looked after' pupils has been monitored and analysed and this shows that they progress just as well as other pupils. There is clear evidence that the school acts on their analysis of data. For example, an intervention programme to increase the rate of progress of a group of Black British, African and Caribbean boys in mathematics was successful. Pupils entered for Key Stage 2 tests in 2005 in English, maths and science achieved outstanding results. The Key Stage 3 maths and science results were also outstanding with pupils achieving National Curriculum levels 2,3,4 and 5 in 2005, compared to none passing the tests in 2004. The number of older pupils taking part in work experience in local businesses has increased greatly and all pupils now have the opportunity to gain qualifications by the time they leave the school. As one parent said, 'The school has made an amazing difference to my child's progress.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school judges the personal development and well-being of pupils to be outstanding and inspectors agree. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There is a wealth of opportunity for pupils to learn about the music, beliefs and lifestyles of different communities around the world as well as the multicultural nature of British society. There are many times when pupils reflect in wonder and excitement upon their learning experiences in lessons. The sensory experience that pupils appreciate when entering the warm water of the swimming pool is evident in the smiles on their faces. They enjoy coming to school so much that they even attend when they are unwell because they don't want to miss their schooling. Attendance is good taking account of the times when pupils are away from school for medical reasons. The percentage of unauthorised absence is very low indeed. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils relate very well to each other and to all adults, and are extremely polite to visitors, of which there are many. The pupils, through the school council, make their views known and make positive suggestions concerning the school. For example, some

pupils who are now elected members of the school council instigated a whole school appeal for money to support the victims of the recent tsunami. Older pupils volunteered to provide a very enjoyable time for the younger ones, each dressing as Father Christmas and visiting their classes at Christmas. Pupils feel safe; they adopt healthy lifestyles and follow safe practices, as well as they are able. They acquire useful skills to help them prepare for the next stage of their education or employment, as well as taking part in community activities whenever they can. A parent wrote, 'Our son is making good progress and the school has made such a difference, that family life is so much happier.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils excel in their lessons because teaching and support is of a high standard. Work is well matched to individual pupils' needs and targets are specific, challenging, and ensure there is good progression in their learning. Relationships are excellent, as is the management of pupils which enables them to be confident and happy in their learning. One parent said of her son, 'His confidence and skills have developed and the support he gets is tremendous.'

Teaching is excellent across the school. Support staff work closely and effectively with teachers to ensure that all pupils get full access to activities and can maximise their individual learning. Information from assessment informs teachers' planning, which is detailed and shows a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing. There is regular monitoring of lessons by senior staff and supportive feedback and quality training opportunities are offered to help teachers further improve. Although individual learning is supported by the use of ICT in some lessons, it is still not consistently planned for to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. In the very best lessons, teachers provide a wide range of relevant and motivating activities with effective use of signing and visual prompts and/or a multi-sensory approach. All pupils' needs are carefully considered, and cooperative and independent learning is encouraged. There is effective and continuous monitoring and recording of pupils' achievement, and it is made very clear to pupils how they may improve. Learning is made fun and there is a positive ethos of reward and celebration of individual achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is very effective in meeting the wide ranging learning needs of all pupils. The curriculum framework has recently been revised, in order to include suitable learning activities and challenge for all pupils. All aspects of 'Every Child Matters' are clearly woven into all curriculum planning. Personal, social and health education, and citizenship are emphasised, and make a significant contribution to pupils' growing self-confidence and maturity. Strong encouragement is given for

pupils to develop their independence skills, for example when travelling to their work placements. This includes an understanding of staying safe and dealing with difficult situations. The curriculum covers all areas of learning and, for more able pupils, the National Curriculum. There is a multi-sensory approach for pupils with sensory impairment and complex needs, which enables them to enjoy learning and achieve their individual targets. Older pupils follow courses that lead to recognised national qualifications. A number of pupils attend a local secondary mainstream school for lessons in science, design and technology, physical education, food technology and art and design. Pupils benefit from a range of trips to areas of interest and inter-school sporting competitions, where they are very successful. The curriculum allows pupils' achievement to be celebrated and consequently pupils enjoy their learning, increase in confidence and appreciate the progress they make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding levels of care, guidance and support from all teachers and support staff. The total commitment of staff is reflected in the ways in which health and safety are promoted in all aspects of school life. There are robust child protection procedures and thorough risk assessment of all activities. The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils of all ages. Challenging targets are set for all pupils which are clearly understood by all and there is a constant review of pupils' progress towards meeting them. The school works extremely closely with parents and external support agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are effectively met. One parent wrote, 'It is a wonderful school and we consider ourselves very fortunate that our son is able to achieve his potential in such a positive caring and well run environment.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The very knowledgeable headteacher has an inspirational and supportive leadership style and a clear vision for improvement. He is very ably supported by a senior leadership team who have a clear understanding of how to ensure the vision is effectively put into practice. All aspects of school self-evaluation and the importance of 'Every Child Matters' are very clearly understood by all staff.

The high quality of leadership and management has a significant impact on the achievement of pupils and the progress they make. Self-evaluation processes are well established and the views of the parents, pupils, governors, community, and support services are carefully considered. Consequently, the school's views of itself are accurate, as are its prioritised areas for improvement. The school clearly demonstrates an excellent capacity to continually improve. The continued professional development of all staff is a strength of the school and pupils' learning benefits from the very high standard of specialist knowledge and support. Support staff in particular are highly trained and their team-work with teachers is outstanding. Not surprisingly, staff morale is high as

their work is valued, not least by the parents; and the impact of their work is clearly seen in the excellent progress and achievement of the pupils. There is systematic and effective monitoring, recording and assessment of pupils' progress and the data is carefully analysed to identify rates of progress across the different groups of pupils. Monitoring procedures for improving the quality of education are well established and performance management for all staff is in place. Governance of the school is good. All statutory requirements are met and governors provide an effective level of challenge to ensure they fully understand what the school is all about.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you all for making our visit such a pleasurable experience, we really enjoyed our time in your school. It was a real pleasure to see you working in lessons and making such good progress. Special thanks must go to those pupils in the school council who we met, and who explained to us what was good about your school. We thought your school was excellent too, and there were many things we liked:

* You all receive an excellent education and you are cared for extremely well.* You are very well behaved, friendly and get on very well with everybody.* You enjoy coming to school, are happy in your lessons and make excellent progress towards your challenging targets.* Your teachers and support staff make a great team and ensure your lessons are interesting and enable you to achieve your best.* Your parents/carers really appreciate what the school does for you.* Your headteacher and all the staff do their best to make sure you are happy and have everything you need to succeed. They listen to you carefully.* Your school knows what it is good at and how it can improve even more.* Your progress is recorded very carefully and staff let you know how you can get even better. You are well prepared for life outside of school.

There is one thing that could be improved. Teachers could let you use computers more to support your learning in different subjects.Once again, thank you for your help and making our visit such a pleasant one.

Yours sincerely

M.J. Smith

Lead Inspector