

Whitefriars School

Whitefriars Avenue, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 5RQ

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- High-quality leadership at all levels has transformed the school. Federating with a local outstanding school has enabled leaders to apply successfully their systems and procedures to raise pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders and the trust share the same values and aspirations for the school. Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds are welcomed into school. They receive the support and encouragement they need to excel.
- From starting points that are typically low for their age, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make very strong progress. Outcomes achieved by the end of key stage 2 are exceptionally high.
- High-quality teaching ensures that pupils continue to make exceptional progress in key stage 3. Teachers assess thoroughly what pupils of all abilities have already learned, and identify what else they need, to progress quickly to the next stage.
- Pupils love learning. They value highly the regular guidance and advice provided by staff to help them rectify errors, avoid misconceptions and improve their work.
- Expectations of pupils are very high. From an early stage, they are expected to think for themselves, develop independence and reflect deeply on their learning.
- Behaviour is excellent. Pupils in all key stages demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning, attend regularly and engage fully in school life.
- A broad, balanced curriculum ensures that all pupils acquire key literacy and numeracy skills needed for the next stage of their education. An exceptional range of enrichment activities, thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, further enhances the curriculum.
- Leaders, trust directors and stakeholders work effectively across both schools to ensure that the school gains from the good practice and proven leadership capacity within the federation.
- Leaders have rightly identified where further work is needed. Their prompt action to strengthen provision and leadership in the early years is securing rapid improvement.
- Pupils are kept safe in school. All safeguarding arrangements are fully met.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that recent changes made in the Reception class become firmly embedded and lead to further, sustained improvement by:
 - evaluating thoroughly what changes are working well and leading to improvement, and what needs developing further
 - holding leaders and managers accountable for showing the full impact of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The executive headteacher, ably supported by her team of senior leaders, has transformed the culture and ethos of the school. Underachievement, weak teaching and poor behaviour evident in the past have been resolved and are no longer tolerated. Expectations of staff and pupils are very high.
- The school has flourished under the executive headteacher's leadership. In a short space of time, it has expanded rapidly into a successful, popular all-through school. Notable strengths forged in the school's primary phase, particularly in teaching and learning and in managing pupils' behaviour and welfare, now extend into key stage 3. Further dedicated work by senior and middle leaders has ensured that Year 9 pupils are ready to progress into the school's new key stage 4 provision in September 2018. New subject leaders have already been appointed to lead this exciting stage of the school's development.
- Evaluation of the school's effectiveness, carried out jointly between senior leaders and the trust, is accurate. This information is used well to inform plans for improvement. Areas for further development are suitably prioritised. Clear milestones and targets are in place to gauge the rate of improvement made.
- Leaders have harnessed the knowledge and experience within the trust to provide extensive training for new and experienced staff. Procedures and routines known to work well in its partner school have been applied systematically to gain greater consistency to teaching, learning and assessment, and to the management of behaviour. This sharing of good practice adds significantly to the school's capacity to improve further.
- The learning and progress of each pupil is central to the school's work in both the primary and secondary phases. Leaders expect staff to reflect on their teaching and consider the impact it has on the learning of each pupil. Routine, robust monitoring by senior and middle leaders checks that the school's agreed procedures for assessing how well all pupils are doing are followed consistently. Leaders hold staff accountable for making effective use of the information gained from their assessments to re-shape learning so that it builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do. This leads to pupils' substantial progress and high standards.
- Leaders at all levels share a common understanding, based on the school's values. These values, such as tolerance, respect for one another and observing the individual rights of others, underpin much of the school's work. New staff joining the school are expected to foster these values and promote them fully in their work.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well. All pupils are seen as individuals. Staff get to know them and their families well and go out of their way to ensure that all pupils are fully included in school. Those who speak English as an additional language, have SEN and/or disabilities or are from disadvantaged backgrounds are treated in exactly the same way. Teachers are expected to take responsibility for them by tailoring learning to meet their individual needs.

- The excellent facilities and school grounds are used to provide pupils with an enriched curriculum that stimulates their interest and enthusiasm for learning. In all key stages, literacy and numeracy skills are taught exceptionally well in English, mathematics and science, and are also reinforced in a broad range of other subjects. Leaders' expectations of the quality of work produced by pupils in all subjects are consistently high.
- Promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates much of the school's work. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce the school's values of respect and tolerance of others. Weekly tutorials, assemblies and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons remind pupils of the high expectations staff have of them. They also broaden their wider understanding of modern British society, including the risks attached to radicalisation and extremism.
- Parents and carers shared a range of views during the inspection. Generally, they are very supportive of the school's work. One parent commented: 'My daughter really enjoys Whitefriars. She feels happy, safe and part of an extended family. The teaching staff are very conscientious and caring and constantly strive for the best for all children.'

Governance of the school

- Trust directors, supported by stakeholders, oversee effectively the governance of both schools within the federation. They are professional and organised and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the school.
- They manage the school's strategic development well. They have appointed senior leaders who share the trust's ambitions and are fully committed to maintaining the school's inclusive approach and its values.
- Directors are well informed. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Regular 'key dial' reports from senior leaders keep them up to date with the school's performance.
- Finances are managed effectively. Directors are fully aware of the impact of additional funding on the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They monitor the spending of the physical education (PE) and sport premium but have not ensured that the review of last year's spending is on the school's website.
- Directors have overseen effectively the building of new, fit-for-purpose facilities to accommodate its expansion into an all-through school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All required checks are made when recruiting adults to work with children. The single central record is complete and meticulously maintained.
- A designated leader for child protection, ably supported by a team of staff responsible for inclusion, ensures pupils' safety. Vulnerable pupils are known well. Records of concerns or disclosures are suitably maintained in a timely way.

- The school site is fully secure. Access to school buildings is managed effectively to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils demonstrate a detailed understanding of how to keep safe online. They are taught about the dangers involved and are told what to do if they have concerns.
- All safeguarding training is up to date, including the 'Prevent' duty training to raise staff awareness of the risk of extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Consistent application of the school's agreed policy and procedures for teaching, learning and assessment leads to exceptional progress made by pupils. Leaders' management of teaching ensures that this common approach is adopted by staff throughout all key stages, so that the individual needs of all learners are fully met.
- Systematic assessments of what pupils have learned previously are used to plan the 'next steps' of learning. In lessons, teachers follow the school's policy of grouping pupils together, based on what they have already achieved. Teachers and support staff work alongside those who have already secured a thorough understanding, those who need help to consolidate the learning and those requiring much more intensive teaching.
- Leaders expect teachers to set pupils consistent 'questions for learning'. Staff provide them with different resources and tailored support to enable each of them to reach the next stage. Staff facilitate learning well by providing support where it is needed, and leaving those who know what to do to get on quietly with their work. This approach also enables pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to receive effective, additional support.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically. They provide pupils with prompt oral and written feedback in lessons in line with the school's own policy. This enables pupils to achieve well and prevents those at risk from falling behind. Inspectors noted that, in lessons, pupils love the challenges provided for them and work hard because they want to produce the best work they can.
- In key stages 1 and 2, teachers embed basic literacy and numeracy skills well. The school's own approach to routine marking of pupils' writing identifies common spelling and grammatical errors. It also shows pupils what they can do to improve their work. Questioning promotes high-quality responses from pupils and enables them to deepen their understanding. Pupils show great pride in their work. Writing is well presented, and marking is diligently followed up. In mathematics, errors in calculation and other misconceptions are promptly identified. Pupils are expected to check and correct their work. Pupils told inspectors that this really helps them to understand and deepen their learning.
- In the past, not all of the most able pupils in the primary phase have achieved a higher standard in writing compared to others nationally. Leaders have asked teachers to raise their expectations of these pupils to ensure that they are fully challenged. For example, in a key stage 2 lesson, inspectors noted that banning the use of simple verbs encouraged pupils to think hard, find other examples and consider more complex words to broaden their vocabulary.

- Expectations of pupils are high. Very few pupils misbehave. This is because they all understand what they have to do. The school's approach to teaching encourages pupils to think hard and work by themselves for sustained periods of time. Discussions between staff and pupils, and among their peers in lessons, are mature and sensible. Suitably challenging tasks and routine assessments of pupils' work instil in pupils the resilience and perseverance needed to make rapid gains in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are exceptional. They share very positive relations with staff and with their peers. Pupils who met with inspectors said that they are proud to be part of the school. They enthused about participating in the after-school clubs provided and the off-site visits organised for them.
- The 'meet and greet' at the start of the day sets the tone for learning. Pupils are known well and are welcomed into school. Staff are always available at the start and at the end of each day to follow up concerns raised by parents.
- At breaks and lunchtimes, pupils gather in friendship groups or play games cooperatively. In the primary phase, pupils contribute to school life by volunteering as playground sports leaders and as eco-warriors. As a Rights Respecting School, pupils act as ambassadors to discuss how the rights of individuals can be promoted effectively. One pupil summed up the school's inclusive ethos by saying, 'Each pupil is unique, but at the same time everyone is treated equally and respectfully.'
- In weekly assemblies, pupils are reminded of the 'value of the month', and are asked to consider how they can help to promote it. They told inspectors that this is important because 'Values help us to become better people.' Pupils enjoy their personalised 'special mentions'. Teachers praise them for showing initiative, demonstrating independence and perseverance. They value the certificates awarded for their good work and wear their rewards badges with pride.
- Impartial careers guidance, including specialist advice on studying science, technology and mathematics subjects, and in art and computing, has enabled pupils in key stage 3 to make informed choices about which GCSE courses to pursue later this year.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school is a calm, orderly place. Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite, well mannered and eager to talk with visitors.
- In lessons, inspectors found that pupils self-regulate their own behaviour. They understand the high expectations of them and know the consequences for poor behaviour. Teachers rarely need to intervene to manage behaviour because routines are firmly established, expectations are high and pupils remain focused on learning. The school's own records show very few incidents of poor behaviour.

- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is managed well. They feel that the school is a very safe place to be at all times. Pupils said that generally they feel free from all types of bullying, and that should incidents occur they would be promptly sorted out by staff. A very small minority of parents who responded by free text during the inspection raised concerns about bullying. Inspectors' scrutiny of records and meetings with pupils and staff found little evidence to support this view. One parent praised the school's work in tackling bullying, saying, 'The school listened to my concerns and dealt with the issue urgently and effectively.'
- Leaders' approach to resolving behaviour matters is to discuss with pupils the reasons for their poor behaviour and the actions they need to take to modify it. Leaders are fully committed to this approach because they feel that it is an effective way of raising expectations of pupils, based on the school's values of respect and care for one another. A very small minority of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey commented that, at times, they do not always have enough time to follow up behaviour matters fully.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Current attendance is above average. Absence rates are falling due to increased monitoring and further challenge of the parents of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Since opening as an academy, outcomes have risen significantly. Overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 have remained well above average for the past three years. All pupils achieve as well as each other, including disadvantaged pupils. Significantly, the progress made by all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in reading and in mathematics over the past two years has been remarkably high.
- A larger-than-average proportion of pupils join the school speaking little or no English. Giving these pupils access to the English language is one of the school's top priorities. Based on their very low starting points, pupils make outstanding progress during key stages 1 and 2. Standards achieved by the large majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in Year 6 in 2017 were exceptionally high.
- Attainment in key stage 1 is also high. Last year, a much higher-than-average proportion of pupils made progress against the targets set for them. Effective teaching of phonics at an early age ensures that pupils' reading skills are developed well. They learn quickly because most staff model letters and sounds clearly and give pupils lots of opportunities to practise and read aloud.
- Regular guided reading and weekly opportunities to read for pleasure promote a love of reading. Listening to a small group of Year 8 pupils read confirmed leaders' views that pupils who arrive in school speaking little or no English are taught effectively and promptly learn how to read.
- Throughout the primary phase, overall progress in writing has remained above average. However, pupils make less progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. Significantly, the proportion of most-able pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, learning at a higher standard in writing has been low in recent years.

- Leaders' actions to remedy this have led to rapid improvement. Wider opportunities for pupils to read more often to broaden their vocabulary and focusing on their spelling and application of grammar have improved the quality of pupils' written work significantly. Work seen by inspectors in a wide range of pupils' English books was of a high standard.
- Furthermore, inspectors' scrutiny of topic books confirmed that pupils develop their writing across a wide range of subjects in key stage 2. Sufficient time is allocated to enable pupils to write in detail about their scientific findings, the wider world and the lifestyles, art and culture of different countries. Inspection findings confirmed the views of leaders who predict a much higher percentage of most-able pupils in Year 6 to attain highly in national tests this year.
- Pupils leaving the primary phase are exceptionally well prepared for their secondary education. Leaders monitor the progress of each pupil, in line with the school's values and approach to teaching and learning. Inspectors' observations and scrutiny of pupils' work in key stage 3 confirmed leaders' views that most pupils build on the solid foundations achieved in the earlier key stages and continue to make strong progress.
- Inspectors found that, in mathematics, good questioning and discussion enabled Year 8 pupils to demonstrate their firm grasp of problem solving using percentages. In science, detailed subject knowledge, clear routines and high expectations of staff enabled Year 9 pupils to engage fully in practical tasks and enjoy their learning. Expert teaching in art and PE in Year 7 led to sustained progress made by pupils.
- Key stage 3 pupils who met with inspectors all feel that they are progressing well. They said that teachers show them how to make the 'next steps' in their learning and provide them with challenging work in lessons. They value the praise from teachers and the constructive criticism, which they feel pushes them to improve their work. They were proud to show inspectors examples of their persuasive writing and poetry.

Early years provision

Good

- New, purpose-built facilities, high-quality teaching and good care ensure that children in Nursery make an excellent start. Children's safety and welfare are suitably prioritised. Access to and from the Nursery is carefully controlled.
- The Nursery is a rich, vibrant environment in which to learn and play. Full use is made of the classroom, its resources and the outdoor area to develop routines, stimulate children's interest and foster their love of learning.
- Leaders' planning incorporates a wide range of resources to prompt children's curiosity, creativity and imagination. Play activities are complemented by high-quality, adult-led learning tasks. Relations between children and staff are excellent. Adults take every opportunity to promote children's speech and language and instil in them the social skills they need to play together safely.
- Leaders ensure that children's development is carefully monitored against the early learning targets set for them. Records show that, based on starting points that are typically very low for their age, children make rapid progress, especially in moving and handling, and shape, space and measures.

- Approximately half of the Nursery children progress into the Reception class. Leaders take early action to meet with all parents and visit children in their homes prior to starting to ensure their smooth transfer into full-time education. Regular contact with parents at the start and end of each day enables staff to maintain good relations with parents.
- The proportion attaining a good level of development is above average. Based on their low starting points, this represents good progress. In 2017, fewer disadvantaged children attained a good level of development compared to the previous year and to other children nationally. Senior leaders have taken prompt action to deal with this and ensure that a higher proportion is fully prepared for key stage 1.
- Inspection findings confirm that leaders' actions are securing rapid improvement. Changes made to the Reception have improved the quality of planning and promote children's free flow between indoor and outdoor learning and play. Space in the three classrooms has been merged to create 'zones' that enable children to develop their creativity, increase their understanding of the world and learn skills in phonics, writing, use of number and computing. In this rich learning environment, children thrive.
- Teaching is good. Routines are well established. Children develop independence from an early age. They learn and play together for sustained periods of time, without adult support. Inspectors noted a good blend of teacher-led and child-initiated play, based on the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. This led to strong progress in mark-making, art, design and construction, discovery and role-play.
- Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are in place. A senior leader with extensive experience of early years settings works alongside the phase leader to ensure that recent changes become firmly established. The impact of these changes has not been fully evaluated. Consequently, leaders are unable to show the full effect of their work.

School details

Unique reference number	141071
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10049008

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	893
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ms Lynne Malzard
Executive Headteacher	Lucy Caswell
Telephone number	020 8427 2080
Website	www.whitefriarsschool.net
Email address	office@whitefriars.harrow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school did not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the impact of the PE and sport premium last year.
- The school became an academy in 2014. Currently, it has pupils in key stages 1, 2 and 3. Key stage 4 provision will commence in September 2018. This was its first section 5 inspection.
- The school is part of a federation with the Heathland School. It is also part of the Heathland Whitefriars Federation, a multi-academy trust.
- The majority of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. For almost three quarters of pupils, their first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those with an education, health and care plan, is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 40 lessons, mostly with one of the school’s senior leaders. They attended an assembly, visited tutorials and carried out a learning walk to gauge the quality of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior and middle leaders, a group of newly qualified teachers, three trust directors and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work. They looked at safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the academy board, records of pupils’ attendance and behaviour, and other information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ books in lessons and sampled a selection of topic books belonging to pupils in key stage 2. They considered 34 free texts sent by parents and carers during the inspection, 46 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, 50 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and 60 responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Ben Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Loukes	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Hamill	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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