



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

26th June 2017

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Summary

Christopher Whitehead Language College is a school of 1262 students whose population is growing rapidly; the population is likely to reach 1500 within the next two years due to higher pupil admission numbers and the expanding Sixth Form which is moving into its third year.

The school has a larger than average population of White British students, with a higher number of girls than boys. The percentage of students eligible for FSM is broadly in line with the national average whilst the percentage of students from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English is below the national average statistic. The percentage of students who receive SEN support is broadly in line with the national picture, although the school has fewer EHC plans than the national picture presents.

The school's ethos is captured by the following statements:

*"At Christopher Whitehead Language College, we aim to pursue excellence in all we do.
We are an inclusive school that gives equal voice to all, in a context of tolerance,
consideration and cooperation."*

Throughout my two-day visit there was ample evidence that these are simply not just straplines but the living embodiment of life at Christopher Whitehead College. It is an excellent school. The Headteacher and SLT lead by positive example and set the tone for the supportive, caring framework. Governors are fully supportive of the school's ethos, its values and its aims. Staff continuously model school expectations and have excellent relationships with learners throughout the whole school day.

Leadership at all levels is shaped around a set of values and visions determined to create an inclusive school, with a focus on core shared values of raising standards of achievement underpinned by the promotion of the personal development and well-being of all students. There is a focus on ensuring that the curriculum and provision for all students offers a depth and breadth of learning and the curriculum is regularly reviewed. There will be a new curriculum structure in place for September 2017.

I was impressed with the infectious desire of the Headteacher and his senior leaders to create a happy, friendly and caring school and the humility with which they lead their school. Leaders set high expectations of students and staff and are ambitious for all students.

The progress of disadvantaged students is highlighted routinely with the responsibility for measuring progress and impact lies within SLT. GCSE results from July 2016 demonstrate that disadvantaged students are making very good progress at Christopher Whitehead Language College. Allocation of funding and its impact is under constant review with the governor responsible for Pupil Premium; this is reflected in the school's strategy statement regarding evaluation and review.

The physical environment of the school continues to change rapidly with the addition of a new building project that opened in May 2017. New classrooms and facilities within it have created spacious, modern learning spaces which will undoubtedly enhance the experience of students and teaching staff. The dining hall has been recently extended in response to the request and need voiced by students and parents that this is an area shared by the whole school community and should reflect this aesthetically and practically.

The Design and Technology facilities have recently been enhanced to reflect the subject's commitment to teaching students of all abilities throughout the key stages. The school works very hard to maintain an environment that enhances the learning experiences of all and corridor and classroom displays reflect this. The ICT team works very hard to keep staff and students up to date with systems and resources that enhance learning across the school. Office 365 has recently been introduced which offers opportunities for staff and students to develop resources and materials.

Students have access to a wide range of resources across the curriculum e.g. Flip cameras, Mac books, laptops, netbooks, tablets, specific software to support students with specific learning needs and equipment related to practical subjects such as Art, Foundation Learning, DT and Music.

Experienced and skilled LSAs are linked to subject departments and are deployed by subject staff in collaboration with the Additional Needs team. This contributes to confidence within a subject and an opportunity for LSAs to forge excellent working relationships with teachers. Consistency of support directly affects the learning experienced by students. LSAs undergo regular training within their role and are highly skilled in the learning and emotional development of young people.

The school has a robust rewards system including the awarding of credits leading to Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum awards. Subject specific letters and post cards are used across the school. Attendance is rewarded by certificates and letters home, as well as a raffle for two bicycles for students who have achieved 100% attendance that year in both KS3 and KS4. Achievements for excellence, effort and attendance is celebrated at Awards Evening.

The school has a vertical house system which is well established and very successful. Students spoken to were supportive of the system highlighting the many advantages and positives. Throughout my visit, I saw students behaving very well and clearly

demonstrating a shared ethos of respect. The vertical house system creates small communities within the larger school. Students demonstrate support and tolerance of members of their community, often assuming supportive roles which take them beyond the classroom. Peer mentoring is increasing to include Y12 as well as Y10 students. The values' and ethics' programme was set up to ensure that the students receive a wider curriculum which discusses and investigates topics such as friendships and relationships, puberty, sex, drugs, tolerance and understanding. All year groups access the comprehensive V&E curriculum which highlights Anti-Bullying, LGBT, racial discrimination and disability. In the entrance to the school, there are 'Pledges against bullying' written by students. I observed a year 7 Values & Ethics lesson during a very hot afternoon. Students were actively engaged in their lesson and delivery of the lesson was skilful and considered.

An extensive transition programme is in place for years 5-7, including visits to all feeder Primary schools by the Pastoral Assistant Headteacher, AN team and Directors of Studies (DoS). Student voice is intrinsic to the planning of transition and induction. Evaluation and impact is sought from the student body via House Council and School Council which represent a cross section of the school community.

Taster days, some of which are subject specific, are offered to students in years 5 and 6. Open days and evenings for parents and carers are held in the summer term prior to entry. Two transition days have been scheduled for the new cohort of students prior to entry. Extended transition opportunities for vulnerable students throughout the summer term prior to entry. A buddy system is in place to support students new to the school. A peer mentoring system is in place for year 7 students; all peer mentors are trained in their role. Students within their Houses work with newly arrived students within their LM groups; they are carefully selected so that they are able to offer guidance and support.

The school constantly updates and amends the extracurricular provision. Currently included are: Dungeons and Dragons Club, Animal Club, Orchestra, Ukulele Club, Choir, Wheelchair basketball, History Club, Science Club, Maths Club, Creative writing club, Drama Club, Art Club, Football, Netball, Rugby, Butterfly Club, Debate Club, Filmosophy Club. Diverse enrichment opportunities are offered to Y12 and 13. The programmes are designed in conjunction with the student body.

The school employs a Careers teacher who works with students across KS3 and 4. Her role includes keeping up to date with opportunities beyond KS4 and 5, with close liaison with the Head of Sixth form. The Foundation Learning Coordinator works closely with the most vulnerable students and supports their pathways beyond KS4, often visiting post 16 providers and inviting them in to school to meet the students. The school's new Sixth form is adapting its provision to include vocational subjects and currently offers VTCT Level 3 Hairdressing and from September 2017, Sports and Exercise BTEC. I was provided with several case studies of sixth form students who, through the support of the school and sixth form leaders, have flourished at the school. This was an inspiring collection which clearly demonstrates that the inclusive and caring ethos permeates the sixth form too.

A range of external speakers are invited in to school to work with students across all phases, one notable example being Lord Robert Winston!

I was rapt with admiration when I was introduced to the school's Mental Wealth programme. The school's website contains comprehensive information including a handbook from which the following statement of intent is extracted:

"CWLC promotes the mental and physical health and emotional wellbeing of all its students and staff. The school has decided to approach this in terms of mental 'wealth' with the aim that we teach people in our school the skills and resilience to deal with pressures and events in life and will be referred to as such throughout the rest of the policy where appropriate."

"Mental health issues can be de-stigmatised by educating pupils, staff and parents. This is done through mentoring and the V and E programme, through staff training and parent discussion."

The school employs its own School Counsellor who works with students who require her support. She also provides professional development for staff. This has included online-grooming, self-harming, parental separation and more. Students are referred for counselling by pastoral staff and in the sixth form, students can self-refer.

Student voice is clearly given a high priority and plays an integral part in the life and development of the school. I was amazed at the quality of discussion held with the school council. Their energy and sense of responsibility was staggering and their commitment to the ethos and values of the school was absolute. One member of the council described them as being "self-sufficient" and I have no doubt that this is the case. Various members described how they had contributed through a variety of ways. This was my final meeting of the two day visit and it was a superb, inspiring note on which to end!

Students are making consistently outstanding progress, developing secure knowledge across a broad and balanced range of subjects, as a result of good and outstanding teaching. Students' progress is tracked termly; we monitor their performance against individual targets currently based on achieving 3 and 4 levels of progress. Each subject has a progress flightpath which tracks KS2 data/baseline assessments to KS4 end points in all year groups. At KS5 students are tracked from their KS4 data to end of KS5. Students who are falling behind are highlighted for intervention which is coordinated across the school. The school uses external providers to set and moderate targets and to track and monitor progress (ALPS/FFT Aspire).

Staff use data effectively to track progress across all year groups and the SENCO analyses the data of the different groups of students. The data team produces termly data packs which highlights the progress & attainment of all groups of students in all year groups. Middle Leaders analyse this data with their Senior Leadership Team link. Teaching staff reflect on the progress of their classes. Students who arrive "mid-term" are also given targets based on their previous data and monitored during the year. Intervention is then planned for students who are not quite on target.

HLP students are identified by departments and reviewed and updated regularly. The school's HLP co-ordinator analyses the performance of these students after each data capture to ensure they are on target.

Monitoring systems are highly effective and the forensic analysis of assessment information is impressive and enables teachers to intervene and provide additional support for those who need it. This is a clear strength of the school and has played a significant part in enabling students at the school make such impressive progress.

Teaching and Learning at Christopher Whitehead Language College has been deemed outstanding at the last two Ofsted inspections. The Headteacher is an experienced Ofsted inspector which undoubtedly contributes to an understanding of developments and initiatives in the broad field of education. A highly experienced Assistant Headteacher drives the school's developments in the field of Teaching and Learning and works tirelessly with all staff to ensure that the experience offered to the students is of high quality and helps them achieve their true potential in all subjects.

The DofE has approached the school to consider the sponsorship of a local Primary School which has recently been placed in the category of special measures. This reflects the confidence, held at local and national level, in the ability of staff at Christopher Whitehead Language College to lead and develop schools across all phases.

Evidence from Blink and Bounce reviews, formal lesson observations and walk-throughs show that teaching is consistently judged to be 'At' and more frequently 'Above' the high standards expected at the school across all subject areas.

The school's website has a section on Teaching and Learning and contains comprehensive information including articles, blogs, tips and links. It also contains an article from the Guardian about its Observational Classroom which I visited. The development of teaching and leadership is carefully planned and offers staff many opportunities to further their skills and careers. Performance management is robust and developmental.

Parents I spoke to told me how they valued the high-quality communication that exists and the speedy response staff make when parents contact the school. They appreciated the school website saying that it was full of useful information and that it was easy to use.

Commenting upon the vertical house system, which was seen as a positive feature of the school, one parent said: "It's like a big family". The school regularly surveys its parents and results are very positive.

Parents I spoke to were supportive of the school's ethos and were clear that the school had "an excellent Headteacher" who was "always around and did some teaching too". They pointed to his positive attitude and they also appreciated his "rules and values".

The Governing Body is entirely committed to the school and its strong inclusive ethos. Weekly meetings take place between the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher. Policies are regularly reviewed and updated in conjunction with the Governing Body; the implementation of the policy is monitored by link governors with expertise in the field. Governors often attend "Governor Meets" at the local university when broad issues relating to their roles are explored and discussed.

The Governing Body undertakes training within their specific fields, including extensive safeguarding training. Specific training has taken place regarding exclusion and attendance so that the school is supported and to ensure that fair practice presides at meetings with individual families and young people.

Governors are effective and fully aware of their responsibilities and the context of the school and its community. During discussion, it was clear that Governors hold leaders to account and are robust in their pursuance of improved standards. It was also evident, that they are extremely supportive and Governors I spoke to were eloquent in their articulation of a vision for inclusion. They take an active role in the life of the school. There is a good breadth and wealth of experience and skill present amongst members of the Governing Body.

The school is known as the school at the heart of the village in the city and plays an intrinsic part in the local community having been placed in the centre of the suburb of Worcester many years ago. Many parents and grandparents speak fondly of their old school and are proud of their knowledge and understanding of the school in relation to the broader community. The school's strong Duke of Edinburgh programme ensures that its population is highly familiar with opportunities within the local and wider areas.

The "Friends" of the school actively work within the community to develop links and work alongside the community. The highly successful annual Christmas Fayre demonstrates the commitment of the community to the school and its efforts. Each House works with its own local charity and forges strong links with disadvantaged people around the area. The school collects items for the local Foodbank which is forwarded to the local office on a termly basis.

The school works closely with a local PCSO based at CWLC who contributes highly to the school's pastoral team.

This is a school that is providing a very good experience for its students and their families. All staff are dedicated, work hard and are very skilled at what they do. Outcomes are very good and improving. There is a clear sense of warmth and an ethos and culture that ensures that everyone is respected and offered every opportunity to achieve their potential. The school most definitely lives up to its mantra "In pursuit of excellence". That said, it is far from complacent and is constantly seeking to improve and share its practice. It was a pleasure to visit this inspiring school.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

Assessor: Barry Carney

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



Element 1 – The Inclusion Values and Practice of the School

Strengths:-

- Inclusion is central to the school's vision and purpose and this sets the framework in which all work takes place in this warm and welcoming school.
- The leadership of the head teacher, the senior leaders and SEND Leader ensures that all students are supported to attain to their full potential.
- There is a thorough system of data analysis and meetings with parents ensure that all students' needs are identified and that any students who are not progressing as expected are highlighted and targeted for appropriate interventions.
- The needs of pupils on pupil premium are carefully tracked.
- Excellent transition practices are in place.
- The school is very careful to ensure that all students feel they are valued within the school.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.



Element 2 - The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

Strengths:-

- The school's learning environment is very well thought out with excellent learning spaces and is continually being enhanced. Display is very good and clearly demonstrates the school's inclusive ethos.
- Corridors and other spaces are bright and very positive environments, including interesting and engaging displays.
- The extensive new building is a superb facility and will enhance the overall accommodation.
- The school's website is of very high quality being informative, engaging and interactive. It is a resource that is used by all members of the school's community.
- Achievement is celebrated in many ways, including through assemblies, display and certificates.
- Teaching Assistants provide excellent support for students in the classroom or in intervention groups.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.



Element 3 - Learning Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

Strengths:-

- Students are very clear on what is expected of them and they feel very well supported by it. There is a very positive, happy atmosphere in the school and there is mutual respect between staff and students.
- The school works very hard to create an environment where everyone can learn in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect. The school's inclusive values are reinforced during lessons, in extracurricular activities and in the playground.
- In all lessons observed, attitudes to learning were exceptionally positive and behaviour was exemplary.
- Pastoral support and safeguarding arrangements are extremely thorough and ensure that all children's needs are catered for and that children are supported through any difficulties they may face.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.
- There is very a very good Values and Ethics curriculum and an excellent programme of Mental Wealth.
- The school culture includes a strong commitment to student voice and the School Council is highly effective.

Areas for development:-

- Review systems and policies pertaining to exclusion with a view to further reducing incidents resulting in fixed term exclusion.



Element 4 - Learner Progress and Impact on Learning

Strengths:-

- The school is rigorous in tracking student progress and data analysis is forensic leading to excellent outcomes.
- Excellent transition arrangements are in place for children, including liaison with families of children before joining Year 7. Transition between years is also excellent as it is post 16 years of age.
- CPD for staff is an important feature including training and development for staff as well as sharing good practice opportunities.
- Teaching and its support is high quality and consistent.

Areas for development:-

- Consideration should be given to affording Teaching Assistants and Teachers the time to collaborate more frequently so that the abundant expertise of Teaching Assistants is fully exploited across all areas of the school.
- Consider using a system of data collection and analysis that will be more efficient and therefore improve even further, the excellent processes already in place.



Element 5 - Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)

Strengths:-

- The school is thorough in monitoring all aspects of teaching and learning, to ensure a high degree of consistency of standards and approaches across the school.
- Performance management is robust and developmental.
- Professional development offers many excellent opportunities for staff to continue improving their practice.
- Students are focused in their lessons and are thoroughly engaged in learning. Behaviour is very good as is the learning ethos in classrooms.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.



Element 6 – Parents, Carers and Guardians

Strengths:-

- Parents spoken to were very positive about the school's supportive and caring ethos. They value the attention the school gives to the individual needs of their children. They find communication with the school is excellent and the teachers are very approachable, enabling them to see a teacher when they need.
- There is excellent communication with parents, which is enhanced by the welcoming, open ethos of the school. Any concerns expressed by parents/carers are acted upon swiftly and sensitively.
- Parents' views are taken very seriously, so that they can effect changes in the school. Frequent parent surveys are analysed and the results and further action are published and followed through.

Areas for development:-

- The school should investigate The Solihull Approach alongside its excellent provision for Mental Wealth.



Element 7 - Governing Body and Management: External Accountability/Support

Strengths:-

- The governing body is very involved in the life of the school: they provide appropriate support and challenge to the school and share its inclusive values and high aspirations for all pupils.
- Governors have high praise for the school and its work. Governors spoken to were very proud of the school's inclusive values and excellent, supportive work with children and their families.
- Governors work effectively with each governor having a specific area of responsibility on which to report to the whole team. They attend training for governors and seek support from external agencies.
- The governors feel able to support the school and are capable of challenge and being a 'critical friend', when necessary and appropriate, they are fully supportive of the school and the continuing drive to maintain high standards and improve further.
- Governors are vigilant regarding safeguarding, recognising its importance and regularly reviewing practice.

Areas for development:-

- Governors should consider using the framework and criteria for the Governor Mark as means by which it can continue to review its effectiveness.



Element 8 - The School in the Community – How this supports Inclusion

Strengths:-

- Strong and effective partnerships exist with local business and further and higher education organisations through which the curriculum is enriched.
- Students participate in a good variety of clubs and after school activities and participate in a range of school trips to enhance their learning.
- The school has good links with other schools.
- There is a good range of charitable and fund-raising activities that take place.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.