

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



2 November 2018

Mr James Brownlie
Headteacher
Little Heath School
Hainault Road
Little Heath
Romford
Essex
RM6 5RX

Dear Mr Brownlie

Short inspection of Little Heath School

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 2018 with Francis Gonzalez, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Together with leaders and governors, you have worked to ensure that this special school is a happy and safe place for pupils to learn and make friends. Classrooms and other learning spaces are stimulating and well resourced, and the outside areas are used well to encourage physical and sensory experiences for all pupils.

Pupils are taught to be independent throughout their time at the school. This is particularly evident in the sixth form, where there is a strong emphasis on the world of work and preparing for adulthood.

Leaders, including middle leaders, know the school well. As a team, you have a secure understanding of the things you do well and have clear plans to address any areas for improvement.

The majority of parents and carers are happy with the work of the school. They feel that their children are supported to be independent, and they value the school's emphasis on teaching life skills. Parents said that the school helps their child to improve their behaviour and overcome challenges that they may face in life. Parents appreciate the information that you share with them about what you are teaching and when.

Leaders have worked hard to address the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The 16 to 19 study programmes are more appropriate to the needs of students who attend the school, including students who have the most complex needs. Further work is needed to ensure that these improvements are visible in all subjects of the curriculum.

Governors play a strong and effective role in holding leaders to account. This is particularly evident in the areas of resource management and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Governors have a clear focus on ensuring that the school supports the health and well-being of pupils. An example of this is their work to improve the quality of school meals.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff have regular training to understand all forms of abuse and they know how to report any concerns. All adults who work in the school are highly committed to the safety and well-being of pupils, and they work hard to nurture very positive relationships.

The school keeps accurate records on vulnerable pupils, and is rigorous in following up any concerns they have about pupils who may need support from outside agencies. The school carries out appropriate checks on staff who work at the school.

You monitor the systems in place to safeguard pupils and commission regular external audits. The governing body receives regular reports about these checks, and is robust in checking that all identified actions are followed up.

Pupils say that they feel safe at the school, and this is reflected in their eagerness to come to school and their enjoyment in lessons and social times.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to look at how effectively leaders, including governors, ensure that pupils make at least good progress. This is something you have been focusing on in your plans. You have new systems in place to monitor the quality of learning and teaching, and the progress of pupils, which is good throughout the school. Pupils would make better progress if they settled more quickly at the beginning of key stage 3. You are seeking to improve the transition process to the school.
- As a result of your monitoring, you have been able to address weaknesses in teaching. Your effective action has ensured that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Middle leaders regularly monitor their subjects and take action to address any gaps.

- Teachers adapt their lessons to meet the specific needs of all pupils at the school. There are regular opportunities for pupils to practise their communication and social skills in a wide range of interesting ways, including in the community.
- Next, we agreed to look at how well the school's curriculum prepares pupils and students for the next stage in their education and for adulthood. The curriculum is rich and varied. You have made sure that pupils have appropriate subject choices, and you use progress information well to adapt the curriculum to suit individual pupils. Several new additions to the curriculum are proving effective for the wide range of needs of pupils at the school.
- The curriculum supports pupils to keep themselves safe and to be as independent as possible as adults. For example, pupils learn how to use public transport, banks and shops.
- In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils learn about the similarities and differences between people. Pupils are encouraged to develop British values, such as tolerance and respect for others.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how well you and your staff support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. You evaluate this to be an area of strength in the school. The curriculum, together with effective teaching, promote this area well.
- You provide a wide range of additional activities, such as whole-school projects, and sporting and cultural events, inside and outside school. As a result, pupils have opportunities to extend their understanding of the world around them. For example, they practise important life skills such as safe cycling. These additional activities contribute to pupils being better prepared for their future lives as independent adults.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new aspects of the curriculum are embedded and rationalised, including the 16 to 19 study programmes, to ensure that pupils have access to a coherent and meaningful programme of study
- assessment systems are developed to reflect the full range of pupils' achievements and measure the impact of the different subjects on pupils' achievements
- transition arrangements are improved for pupils who enter the school at the beginning of, or during key stage 3.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redbridge. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gary Pocock
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your deputy headteacher and your assistant headteacher. We had conversations and meetings with parents, the chair of the governing body and another committee member. Inspectors visited all classrooms, accompanied either by you or one of your senior leaders. We talked to a wide range of pupils and staff and, together with leaders, looked at pupils' work and other evidence to evaluate pupils' progress over time. We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, safeguarding records, pupil progress information, and behaviour and attendance information. We considered responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils, and too few responses to Ofsted's parent survey to be considered.