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16 December 2015

Peter Haylock
Executive Principal
Fulham Cross Girls' School
Munster Road
Fulham
London
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Dear Mr Haylock

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Fulham Cross Girls' School

Following my visit to your academy on 26 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your academy.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View
- discussions with academy leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the predecessor school's last inspection.

Context

Fulham Cross Girls' School is a smaller-than-average secondary academy within the Fulham College Academy Trust. The other academies within the trust are Fulham College Boys' School and Fulham Enterprise Studio. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with just over half who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan is just above average. Pupil mobility is above average. There are currently no staff vacancies.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the academy is of a very high standard. Pupils are keen to do well, enjoy their lessons and work diligently and hard. Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and the progress they make. They plan interesting and challenging activities that fully engage pupils in their learning. Pupils work harmoniously together in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. The atmosphere in lessons is calm, supportive and reflective. Pupils take great pride in their work and are keen to explain how the teacher and other pupils give them valuable feedback. As a result, pupils make rapid progress across subject areas and this is celebrated throughout the academy community.

The academy has a clear code of conduct and established routines to which all staff and pupils adhere. These are effectively promoted throughout the academy site on posters and in pupils' planners. Pupils understand how to achieve rewards for positive attitudes to learning and conduct, and about the sanctions they might receive. Pupils, particularly in Years 7 and 8, enjoy collecting stamps on their 'passport' to achieve their 'empower' badge – this year's theme. Many were proud to show the 'heroic' badge they had achieved last year. The consistent application of this system by all staff, including those new to the academy, ensures that all pupils understand the very high expectations required by the academy of their behaviour. Pupils commented that the academy rules were to protect them, ensure their emotional well-being and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

At breaks and lunchtimes, expectations around behaviour and conduct are equally high. Staff are vigilant in their supervision. 'Future leaders' coordinate a number of prefects who are there to help and support younger pupils. 'Big sisters' offer additional support for younger pupils completing homework or undertaking arts and craft projects in lunchtime clubs, such as 'Joanna's club'. Pupils value highly the support offered by prefects and 'big sisters'.

The busy canteen is organised and litter-free. Pupils use this area to eat and spend time with friends. They are quick to clear away their things and lunchtime supervisors commented on how polite and helpful the girls are. During the inspection, a number of pupils made a special effort to talk to the small number of pupils who have autism and were having lunch with their teacher. Their respect and tolerance of each other in this diverse learning community are notable.

Pupils move around the historic building and the numerous, narrow stairwells in an orderly and quiet way. To ease pressure at busy times, following breaks and lunchtimes, academy leaders have recently introduced a 'line-up' system. Pupils quickly join their tutor group on the hard court area and wait to be led into the academy for the next session. They have quickly established this routine and the whole process is exercised quietly and efficiently.

Pupils often travel long distances on public transport to and from the academy. Leaders carefully track the few who are persistently late. Staff ensure the safety of pupils leaving the academy site by supervising bus stops and local roads. Pupils uphold the reputation of the academy as they depart in a quiet and disciplined way. They wear their uniforms with pride and act in a courteous and polite way to each other and members of the public.

The systems to protect pupils at the academy are highly effective. Staff receive regular training in current legislation and are knowledgeable about some of the risks facing the young women at the academy. Information to help pupils keep themselves safe is integrated throughout subjects and taught explicitly in religious studies, personal, social and health education and in assemblies. Help for pupils is promoted widely. Pupils' identity cards give the names, photographs and contact details of two members of staff who can be contacted should pupils be concerned about any issue. There is also a confidential email address for pupils to share any worries. Further information is published in pupils' planners. Pupils were quick to identify a range of staff with whom they would feel secure sharing any concerns.

Pupils are unanimous that bullying is very rare. They can describe different types of bullying, but feel that any incidents of perceived bullying at the academy are 'silly banter' and dealt with quickly and efficiently. The academy's records support this. The three cases reported last year were fully investigated and dealt with appropriately. There have been no cases reported this academic year. The compassionate and supportive behaviours seen during the inspection support this view. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View also believe this to be the case.

Attendance was above the national average last year. Information provided by the academy indicates that this might be slightly lower this year, but still above the national average.

Academy leaders robustly track pupils' behaviour and this information is regularly analysed to ensure that individual needs are met. Staff use a range of strategies to support the very small minority of pupils whose behaviour falls short of the academy's high expectations. Academy leaders have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of aggression or behaviours that could bring the academy into disrepute. Over time, the number of pupils excluded for a fixed period of time due to poor behaviour has decreased. However, a recent incident has resulted in school leaders taking swift and appropriate action to sanction the behaviour of a small group of pupils in line with the academy's policies and procedures. Academy leaders do not take this action lightly. They are continuously looking for other ways to promote positive behaviour.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to work on strategies that will reduce the incidence of pupils at risk of a fixed-term exclusion.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Hammersmith and Fulham, the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews

Her Majesty's Inspector