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Mr Paul Ward
Headteacher
Redden Court School
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Dear Mr Ward

Short inspection of Redden Court School

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 2016 with Helen Bailey, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have created an inclusive community where pupils and staff relate well to each other. The school is focused on working with families to raise aspirations for pupils. You have ensured that your school community has been involved in developing the school's mission statement, 'committed to success for all'. All of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that they would recommend the school. Pupils are involved in regular assemblies, which strongly promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff who completed the Ofsted survey agree the school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for pupils.

A wide range of colourful displays celebrate aspects of educational trips, school events and culture relevant to life in a modern Britain. This effectively demonstrates the school's aims and vision throughout classrooms and corridors. Staff and pupils respect the environment which is well maintained, and both clean and tidy.

Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school to learn. The attendance of pupils is high and fixed-term exclusions are infrequent. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. Pupils reported that when any unkind behaviour occurs

teachers quickly resolve it. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is supportive, respectful and polite. They relate well to each other both in lessons and around the school. Pupils involve themselves in extra-curricular activities before and after school. Both boys and girls are actively involved in sports before the start of the school. Pupils say they are closely supported and inspectors agree.

You and your leadership team have continued to drive change and address the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection. You rightly recognised the need to improve outcomes for the most able pupils, and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors have evaluated the interventions in place across the school. Your scheme to support the progress pupils make in their reading is secure. However, you are not complacent. You have developed a revised system to monitor pupils' progress and evaluate the help provided to disadvantaged pupils.

Following the 2015 examination results, you have taken prompt action to challenge underperforming subjects. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been a focus in all subjects, but particularly in mathematics, languages, science and history. The provisional 2016 Year 11 examination results show improved outcomes at key stage 4, although some variation remains between English, mathematics and science, and history and geography. You have continued to reduce the gap between the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils are encouraged to read within class and they apply numeracy skills with confidence. However, while most pupils continue to achieve well from their starting points, teachers are not all using the detailed assessment information to extend the progress pupils make.

You and your governors are keen to ensure that the ethos to raise pupils' aspirations continues. Governors are well informed. Your self-evaluation rightly reflects the progress made in supporting the needs of all pupils. As a result, the attainment of the most able pupils continues to rise. You are correct in your evaluation that more work is needed to ensure that all pupils make the strongest progress possible from their different starting points. This will help them to gain the highest outcomes across a wide range of subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school places great emphasis on supporting the needs of pupils and their families. Staff work carefully with families and wider agencies to provide for pupils' welfare, care, guidance and support. You and your leaders place safeguarding at the heart of the school. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are very aware of the important role they play in promoting the safety of pupils and understand how to reduce risk. The single central record for recording the checks made on staff meets statutory requirements. Leaders and governors carefully and regularly review it to ensure that records are detailed and of a high quality.

Regular safeguarding training for staff includes aspects such as preventing radicalisation and extremism, and the appropriate use of social media. The school works closely with the police safer schools team. Leaders frequently review the procedures for safeguarding. Pupils feel safe because they can raise concerns to any member of staff, or through the school's safeguarding telephone number.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, the school's outcomes for pupils have improved. In 2015, seven out of ten Year 11 pupils achieved five or more good GCSE results including English and mathematics. The provisional results for 2016 show this to have improved to 75%. However, the results indicate that while outcomes are strong in a range of subjects, the performance in English slightly declined when compared with the 2015 results.
- The performance of the most able pupils has been a focus for the school. More pupils are now achieving the highest GCSE grades and the differences between the performances of middle-attaining, disadvantaged pupils, and boys and girls have continued to diminish.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the need to improve the outcomes for pupils. They recognise that while pupils' attainment has risen, progress of the most able and most able disadvantaged could be even stronger.
- The school's own information, based on the 2016 Year 11 provisional examination results, shows that pupils' progress in science is broadly average overall. However, pupils made better progress in mathematics and languages when compared with 2015 outcomes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to make good progress from their individual starting points. They benefit from a range of help. Inspectors observed pupils in the resource base making good progress in developing their reading and literacy skills. The environment was calm and pupils received effective targeted help to meet their individual needs.
- Leaders continue to evaluate the curriculum and the standard of teaching. Since the last inspection, the curriculum offer has been refined so that pupils have better access to the English Baccalaureate subjects. This has resulted in improved attainment across a range of subjects. New middle leaders have been appointed for mathematics, science and history to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore, the headteacher has directly line managed the modern foreign languages department to raise teachers' expectations.
- Middle leaders and staff receive information about pupils' needs so they can identify groups of pupils and assess their progress. This approach has helped to raise the outcomes of the most able pupils. However, not all teachers consistently demonstrate the high expectations set by leaders in lessons. For example, the assessment feedback provided to some of the most able disadvantaged pupils does not always challenge them to make substantial progress. In these cases, feedback to pupils is often generic or not reflective of the quality of the work seen. Leaders who accompanied inspectors were aware of this variation. They described how it is included in senior team discussions about pupils' work.

- Work seen in some of the books by inspectors showed differences in quality. For example, the work in a few pupils' books in Year 7 was either incomplete or they had failed to respond to teachers' requests. This was particularly true of work seen in history and geography.
- Pupils in Year 11 science and English were aware of their target grades for GCSE. However, some most able disadvantaged pupils were less knowledgeable of how to improve their work. Inspectors confirmed that some variation remains in the use of assessment between subject areas and year groups.
- The governing body shares an aspiration for the school to be outstanding. Governors are very clear in their statutory duties. They recognise the importance of safeguarding being a corporate responsibility for all. Governors are involved in reviewing the school's plans for improvement and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They regularly visit the school to monitor the progress of pupils and provide effective challenge to leaders. The chair of the governing body has ensured that performance targets set for the headteacher include raising the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' self-evaluation includes the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. It focuses on raising pupils' aspirations. Leaders have accurately identified the need to ensure that all pupils make the strongest possible progress from their starting points. This remains a matter to address further.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school. The school tracks and records incidents of unkind behaviour. Exclusions remain low and attendance is above average. Early help is available to those pupils and families who require it. The school works well with other professionals.
- All pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. This is impartial and includes visits by ambassadors from the Russell Group of universities. The school focuses well on raising aspirations for its pupils.
- Parents indicated in their response to Parent View that they are supportive of the school's work to promote the personal development, behaviour and welfare of their children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment enables all groups of pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged, to make the strongest possible progress from their individual starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lambern
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key focus of this inspection was the work the school has undertaken to improve the progress and attainment of groups of pupils, particularly the most able, disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. We evaluated the effectiveness of leaders' work in addressing the areas of weaker performance from the 2015 examination results and the attendance of pupils. We also reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks on staff along with wider aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Discussions were held with you as headteacher, senior leaders, selected staff and pupils. Meetings also took place with a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body including the chair. Inspectors spoke informally with teachers and pupils during the inspection.

We visited the resource base and a number of lessons, some jointly with leaders to gather evidence on teaching, learning and assessment. We scrutinised pupils' work, the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes of meetings, and information on the 2016 provisional examination results and the attendance and welfare of pupils. We also considered the Ofsted survey responses from parents, pupils and staff, and the school's own pupils' survey.