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Headteacher
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Dear Ms O'Shea

Short inspection of Belvue School

Following my visit to the school on 10 November 2016 with Kanwaljit Singh, 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

As headteacher, you are dedicated to making sure that the pupils of Belvue School make strong progress in all areas of their development. You have risen to the challenge of preparing pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities for adulthood. At the end of their schooling all pupils move on successfully to education, employment or training. You have developed a skilled team of leaders who support you in this work. You have taken action to ensure that the leadership team has the capacity to take on extra responsibilities as the school grows in size.

Leaders have reviewed and improved their systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Senior leaders identify strengths and areas for development accurately. They use a range of evidence to support this work, for example, observing in lessons, looking at pupils' books and holding meetings to discuss pupils' progress. Leaders compare the progress of different groups of pupils to check that none fall behind. Those eligible for pupil premium and those from different ethnic backgrounds make as much progress as others. Until recently, however, leaders have not compared the progress of different ability groups. The most able pupils in some classes are not consistently challenged to move on quickly in their learning.

At the time of the last inspection, pupils made less progress in science than they did in English and mathematics. Leaders took effective action to address this area for

improvement. As a result, pupils now make as much progress in science as they do in these other subjects.

The chair of the governing body took up his position shortly after the last inspection. Since then, there have been several changes to the governing body and, although smaller, it is now more focused in its oversight of the school. However, governors' skills in questioning leaders are underdeveloped. As a result, governors' challenge to leaders regarding their work to improve the school lacks rigour.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Any concerns that arise are recorded meticulously and referred to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner. During the inspection, inspectors saw at first hand how leaders dealt with concerns raised. Leaders acted quickly, taking effective action to reassure themselves that pupils were safe. Similarly, members of staff give safeguarding a high priority, reminding pupils of ways in which they can protect themselves from harm.

Leaders and members of staff are vigilant in spotting signs of possible issues relating to female genital mutilation, radicalisation or children missing from education, and these are passed on to the relevant authorities.

Leaders make sure that all the relevant checks on members of staff, governors and other adults in the school are completed. The single central record is kept up to date and regularly checked by the governor linked to safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- You continue to inspire leaders and other adults to perform well as they improve outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have maintained the school's level of performance as the school has grown.
- Leaders have revised their processes for assessing pupils' progress. This has enabled leaders to make sure that the new system is more tightly aligned to the curriculum on offer in this school. Leaders and teachers worked hard during the 2015/16 year to make sure that the new system was ready for implementation in September 2016. They decided to use both systems in the first instance until the new one is embedded and provides reliable information on the progress made by pupils. Consequently, they continue to have reliable information about pupils' progress from their starting points during the transition period. Leaders and teachers check that the assessments they make are accurate by working with other local schools, particularly the main feeder primary school.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next placements because they achieve a range of nationally accredited qualifications, depending on their abilities and interests. These include GCSE mathematics and, from September 2016, GCSE art and design.

- Pupils make more progress in science than they did at the time of the last inspection. Leaders recruited an experienced science specialist who has developed a structured and appropriate science curriculum. They have invested in a new science laboratory and resources. Science is given a high profile through science week and other events. Consequently, pupils make good progress and many achieve recognised accreditation in the subject at the end of key stage 4.
- Inspectors' observations in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. There is no significant difference in the progress of those who are eligible for pupil premium funding and others. Leaders carefully study the progress of groups, such as those who speak English as an additional language, and boys and girls, to make sure that there are no differences in their achievements. Where differences between these groups have emerged in the past, leaders have taken swift action to make sure that those who have fallen behind catch up.
- Leaders, teachers and other adults have embraced the opportunity to extend the school's provision to cater for pupils with more complex needs. This has required a flexible approach and additional training for the staff team, who work effectively with these pupils. As a result, this group of pupils make strong progress.
- Adults throughout the school make good use of signing, symbols and reduced verbal language to support pupils' understanding well. These systems also promote pupils' reading skills as they learn to decode information in a variety of formats.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully, with a range of activities to suit different ability groups within the class. However, sometimes these activities do not move learning on quickly enough for the most able pupils in the class. In these cases, pupils practise skills they have already secured. For example, some pupils' books showed that they have recently learnt to count, read and write numbers to 20. However, their previous work shows that these skills were embedded some months ago, and they had moved on to more sophisticated number skills.
- Governors are committed to the school and support your vision wholeheartedly. They receive accurate information from you, the local authority link officer and other senior leaders. However, they find it difficult to ask pertinent and challenging questions of leaders because they do not fully understand the school's systems and procedures. Aside from the safeguarding link governor, other governors do not have specific areas of the school's work to oversee. Their visits lack a specific focus and they do not provide formal feedback to governors about visits they make to the school to see its work for themselves.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governance is improved by:
 - strengthening governors' awareness of the working life of the school
 - developing governors' skills and knowledge so that they are able to ask sharply focused questions which challenge leaders to improve pupils' outcomes further

- the quality of teaching is improved so that groups of pupils, particularly the most able within any class, are challenged to achieve as much as they possibly can.

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

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection: whether the systems used to assess and measure pupils' progress are effective and accurate; whether leaders have successfully addressed the recommendations from the last inspection; whether groups of pupils make good progress in a range of subjects; and the effectiveness of governance in holding leaders to account for their work.

Inspectors carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection. Meetings were held with senior leaders, the science teacher and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons alongside the headteacher and her deputy. Pupils' work and other information about their progress was scrutinised. A wide range of documentation was considered, including that relating to safeguarding, records of governors' work and leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching.