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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Diane Khanna
Headteacher
Welling School
Elsa Road
Welling
Kent
DA16 1LB

Dear Mrs Khanna

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Welling School

Following my visit to your academy with Kanwaljit Singh, Ofsted Inspector, on 26 January 2017, 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 of Education, Children's Services and Skills was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence that included:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

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

Context

Welling School is a much larger than average-sized 11–19 secondary school. The

proportion of pupils who are entitled to free schools meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with support needs, is twice the national average. The school has a significant number of in-year admissions, for example, 25% of the current Year 11 pupils did not start their education at the school in Year 7. Attainment on entry from primary school is significantly below the national average.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The majority of pupils at the school are typically polite, friendly and respectful to each other and adults. Pupils are calm and orderly, both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils were observed lining up quietly to access the canteen, and after using the canteen facilities, pupils tidied up after themselves. The canteen staff said this is typical. They describe pupils, when in the canteen, as 'good as gold'. All areas of the school are well supervised and most pupils report that this is normally what happens. Due to the size of the school, you have two separate break and three separate lunch timings. This is effective in managing the flow of pupils and ensuring that pupils can access the canteen during these times. All pupils that spoke to inspectors stated that they feel safe at the school, including when using cash loaders to pay for their food or drinks, inside the toilets, and in moving around the school. The majority of pupils wear their uniform with pride. Not all adults challenge pupils when they are not wearing their full school uniform.

In lessons, most pupils follow the instructions of their teachers, settle to work quickly and are punctual to their lessons. Attitudes to learning are generally positive. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils at key stage 3 is better, overall, than for pupils at key stage 4. At key stage 4, some pupils take too long to settle down to their work and engage in attention-seeking behaviour.

A revised behaviour for learning policy, including launching the 'Welling Ways' of collaboration, communication, organisation, resilience, leadership and creativity, was launched at the beginning of the school year. This included a new approach as to how teachers should reward good behaviour for learning. You know that the policy is not yet embedded well. In some lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour, lessons begin promptly and any off-task behaviour is challenged quickly. In a few cases, some teachers do not use the range of sanctions quickly or appropriately. Pupils, staff and leaders spoken to during the inspection stated that there needs to be greater consistency so all teachers follow the behaviour policy. Pupils feel that, in some cases, teachers are too slow to use sanctions and in others, teachers do not use rewards enough. Embedding the new policy is, rightly, part of your school improvement planning.

Leaders are clear in their communication to parents and pupils that they will not tolerate certain behaviours, including bullying or fighting. Fixed-term exclusions had

previously been lower than the national average. You are aware that, for example, in the autumn term 2016, fixed-term exclusions rose sharply. This is because you have not shied away from deciding to exclude a pupil where you feel that this is an appropriate sanction. Leaders acknowledge that the number of repeat exclusions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen. As part of the school's equality duty, one of the school's objectives is, correctly, to reduce this.

Leaders, and the governing body, monitor the total number of exclusions. For example, leaders compared the autumn term 2016 with previous autumn terms and analysed exclusions by different year groups. Detentions and pupils' removal from lessons are managed by subject areas. Leaders are not rigorous enough in analysing the proportions of exclusions, detentions, removal from lessons or rewards for different groups of pupils across the whole school. Leaders are, therefore, unable to quickly identify and respond accurately to any emerging trends and patterns. For example, they are unclear as to whether one group of pupils is being disproportionately affected by sanctions more than another.

Pupils who exhibit challenging behaviours over time, including pupils who have specific behavioural needs, are well supported by the school, including through early help and intervention. The adults who work in the school's 'learning zone' provide effective support for pupils in developing their social skills, learning how to manage their emotions and in taking responsibility for their actions. 'The Berwick Centre', situated within the school, manages provision for internally excluded pupils. Staff who work in the centre ensure that pupils are given age-appropriate work to complete during time spent there.

Sometimes, pupils who join the school mid-year can have a high level of need. Your team is working hard to meet these needs effectively and to ensure that appropriate help and support is in place. Sixth-form students are effective role models for younger pupils. They are mature, friendly and interact positively with lower year groups. Sixth-form students talk positively about their experiences when, for example, they were in key stage 4 last year. In the words of a sixth-form student, 'The level of teaching has made me the person I am now.'

Pupils feel that they are educated well on how to stay safe. Pupils are able to talk about what they have learned about staying safe outside of school from a recent assembly on knife crime and offensive weapons from the police liaison officer. School leaders had followed this up with information for parents in the 'Safeguarding Newsletter'. Students spoke confidently about how to stay safe online, including their understanding of sexting and cyber bullying. Pupils know how to stay safe during non-routine events at the school such as a fire drill. Staff, should the need ever arise, know to whom they should report any safety concerns.

Pupils state that differences such as sexual orientation, religion or beliefs are celebrated at the school. In the words of another pupil: 'We learn about how to

prevent hatred.' Almost all pupils spoken to commented, as supported by the school's records, that bullying is rare. Pupils were unequivocally clear that the 'care and guidance' staff that work with each year group are an excellent support to them. This is one reason why pupils feel that there is always an adult to whom they can turn when needed.

Systems for managing attendance and punctuality are effective. Leaders and the governing body analyse attendance information carefully and it is tracked for different groups of pupils. For example, in the autumn term 2016 there was a sharp rise in the number of unauthorised holidays. A rise in fixed-term exclusions has also impacted on the attendance of groups such as pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors looked at a variety of case studies where leaders' actions, including working with parents and carers, have secured improved attendance for pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders ensuring that all teachers follow the school's behaviour for learning policy consistently, intervening quickly particularly when a pupil's behaviour does not meet expectations and using the range of rewards available to them.
- Leaders ensuring that they analyse precisely information about behaviour that relates to exclusions, detentions, removal from lessons and rewards for different groups of pupils, so that they can identify any patterns and respond appropriately.

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

Yours sincerely

Sam Hainey
Her Majesty's Inspector