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Dear Ms Adams

Short inspection of Baskerville School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2017 with Sarah Ashley, 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 2013.

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 instilled a culture of quality, care and high expectations that everyone shares. This is evident in every aspect of the school's work. Parents who spoke with inspectors greatly appreciate the support and encouragement their children receive. One parent commented: 'Thank you is not enough for how much Baskerville staff go far and beyond their job roles to care for each child in the school.'

The school is a calm and happy place. Daily routines, including the transition from the residential provision to the school, are well established. This provides security and stability for the pupils. As a result, the vast majority of pupils enjoy school, attend well, feel safe and are keen to learn. Staff are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. Staff quickly identify pupils who are upset, anxious or troubled and use calming and de-escalation techniques effectively. As a result, pupils' good behaviour and attitudes make a positive contribution to learning.

Since the previous inspection, you have revised the curriculum and the range of subjects that pupils follow. There are four distinct pathways, yellow, purple, green and red. You differentiate each pathway to meet pupils' needs and abilities effectively. For example, the yellow pathway suitably caters for pupils with high-level needs and the red pathway provides appropriate experiences for pupils who have the ability to follow the national curriculum and examination courses. There is

a clear progression on each pathway from key stage 3 through to key stages 4 and 5. Each pathway provides appropriately demanding and relevant courses. Where appropriate, all of the courses in key stages 4 and 5 lead to externally accredited qualifications including GCSEs and courses equivalent to A levels.

Leaders have revised and extended the systems for assessing pupils' progress. You and your staff assess pupils' abilities, aptitudes and needs accurately. Leaders use this information effectively to decide on a pupil's curriculum pathway. Teachers and teaching assistants use the information successfully to plan lessons, experiences, intervention and support that meet the pupils' needs, aptitudes and aspirations. Information provided by the school shows that the vast majority of pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Leaders and teachers quickly identify and successfully support pupils who are falling behind to help them catch up. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are extremely satisfied with their child's progress. One comment reflected the views of many: 'My child has grown & progressed leaps & bounds in the seven years he has attended Baskerville!'

Since the previous inspection, you have focused successfully on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Information provided by the school and the work in pupils' books shows that pupils are doing well in these subjects. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where all of the pupils in key stages 3 and 4 have reached the standards expected of them from their starting points. In addition, pupils have sufficient chances to use and apply their mathematical skills across a range of subjects. The mathematics coordinator has produced a 'calculation' document which teachers of subjects other than mathematics say has helped them understand how to promote pupils' numeracy skills better. You showcase this effective work in your 'numeracy across the curriculum celebration' event, where teachers of English, music and physical education show how they teach numeracy skills in their subjects.

You have introduced a commercial phonics scheme which is greatly helping pupils to improve their reading skills. Your screening checks show that a majority of pupils have improved their reading ages by up to two years in six months. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that there had been a focus on reading and this has helped them to read more fluently and to understand what they have read better. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils make good progress in their writing in English. However, you accept that the push on developing pupils' writing in subjects other than English has slipped recently. As a consequence, pupils' writing is not of the same quality in a small number of other subjects as it is in English.

Teachers support the development of pupils' communication skills well. Teachers and teaching assistants achieve this through clear and unambiguous questioning. Pupils provide their answers or express their feelings through a range of ways. For example, pupils can answer verbally or by indicating their feelings on charts or through pictures.

Pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up premium make good progress from their starting points. Governors are aware of how the money is spent and check the effect the spending has on pupils' progress effectively.

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.

You and your staff take the welfare, health and safety of pupils extremely seriously. All staff adhere to your mantra of 'if in doubt do it' (take action to make sure pupils are safe or to refer an issue to the designated safeguarding lead) and 'never do nothing'. You provide staff with frequent and relevant training and safeguarding updates. As a result, staff know their pupils and their families well. They use this information to provide effective early intervention or appropriate support where needed. Staff are vigilant and sensitive to pupils' sometimes rapid changes in behaviour. All pupils have a risk assessment and an individual behaviour plan. Staff use these documents effectively to anticipate issues and to access effective support for pupils from a wide range of outside agencies.

The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are detailed and thorough. The administration staff who have responsibility for recording the checks made on staff have a secure understanding of current government guidance and keep the records and the staff files well.

Staff take care to check the attendance, safety and progress of pupils who access courses at Bournville College. Students who use this provision told inspectors that they feel safe and that they are making good progress. Information provided by the school supports this view and inspectors agree.

Staff use de-escalation techniques effectively. As a result, physical intervention is rarely used. Records are detailed, thorough and securely kept. The physical intervention records document all the necessary information, for example, the type of physical intervention, and provide an opportunity for the pupil to have their say. Leaders always notify parents if physical intervention is used. However, the analysis of these and other records, such as those for behaviour incidents, in order to identify trends and patterns and to inform subsequent practice is not consistently completed.

You and your staff make sure that pupils understand the potential risks and dangers they may face. You do this through an appropriate safety curriculum and assemblies. For example, pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they understand the risks associated with the use of the internet and mobile phones. All of the pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school, that they know who to talk to if they have a problem and that teachers care for them well. All of the parents who communicated with inspectors agree that their children feel safe in school. One parent commented: 'My son is happy safe and achieving his full potential at Baskerville academically & socially.'

Inspection findings

- The governing body has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors frequently visit the school to meet with staff and pupils. Governors produce relevant reports on the school's effectiveness. They use these reports to challenge leaders' assertions about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Governors, and new governors, have attended relevant national and local authority training. As a result, they broadly have suitable knowledge, understanding and expertise to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. However, governors have not made sure that all of the necessary information is on the school's website. For example, governors have not recorded their business and financial interests.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. You and your staff work hard to develop pupils' learning skills, such as resilience and perseverance, and to teach pupils how to behave in certain situations. Information provided by the school shows that the number of negative behaviour incidents and fixed-term exclusions is reducing and the figure is below that for mainstream and special schools. Pupils' behaviour observed during this inspection reflects leaders' claims that pupils' behaviour makes a positive contribution to the learning environment. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance is in line with national figures for mainstream schools. Staff rigorously follow up pupils' absence. For example, staff telephone parents on the first day of a pupil's absence and do home visits if a pupil's absence extends beyond three days.
- You have revised the school's post-16 curriculum since the previous inspection. Post-16 students at the school and at Bournville College have opportunities to follow accredited courses that meet their needs and aspirations. For example, the most able students follow a combination of academic and vocational courses that are equivalent to A levels. Students also complete work experience. As a result, the vast majority of students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Staff continue to access good quality training in order to improve their teaching and assessment and pupils' learning. You have arranged for a local teaching school to provide training for your teachers and teaching assistants. Staff who spoke with inspectors said that this training was useful and worthwhile. You use staff appraisal to monitor and evaluate the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment and individual teachers' performance. You use this information successfully to identify staff who need additional support. As a result of these actions, pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the effective teaching they receive. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire supported this view. As one parent commented: 'My child is making great progress.' Most of the staff apply the school's policies consistently. However, a few teachers do not. For example, the school's marking and feedback policy is not consistently applied.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff consistently evaluate the information they have on pupils' behaviour and attendance and the incidents of physical intervention in order to inform subsequent practice
- teachers of subjects other than English promote and contribute to improving pupils' writing skills so that pupils' writing is of the same quality in their subject as it is in English
- all teachers consistently apply the school's policies and practices
- the school's website is fully compliant with current government guidance.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

This one-day short inspection focused particularly on a number of key questions. To what extent:

- are the school's safeguarding arrangements effective, particularly in relation to the use of physical intervention and the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children
- does the school's curriculum meet pupils' needs, ages, abilities and aptitudes particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy; preparation for the next stage of education, employment and training; and students' progress in the post-16 provision
- are leaders making sure that the good quality of teaching has been sustained since the previous inspection, particularly in English and mathematics
- do leaders, including the governors, make sure statutory requirements are met and use the information they have to assess the school's effectiveness accurately?

To explore these areas during the inspection, inspectors:

- met with you, assistant headteachers and members of the governing body including the chair
- met with a representative of the local authority

- considered the views of parents from the written responses to the parents' inspection questionnaire
- heard pupils read
- spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and school experiences
- met with staff formally and informally to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection
- scrutinised a number of school documents including the school's self-evaluation documents; safeguarding records, policies and procedures including the checks on staff's suitability to work with children; information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance; records of physical intervention; and minutes of the meetings of governors
- visited lessons across key stages 3, 4 and 5 with you and an assistant headteacher
- visited the school's post-16 provision at Bournville College
- scrutinised a number of pupils' books across a range of subjects.

Inspectors were unable to consider the views of parents from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as there were insufficient responses.