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Mr Tony Clayton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Clayton

Short inspection of The Constance Bridgeman Centre

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2017 with Andrew Hogarth, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your effective leadership has ensured that the school is an orderly and nurturing place to learn and work. Leaders and staff work effectively and are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve their best. Staff are patient and empathetic. This helps pupils to feel secure and inspires them to learn. The school's caring and supportive ethos was evident in the many letters of thanks from former pupils and their parents and carers.

You and your team know your pupils very well. Staff invest considerable time in getting to know pupils, including the reasons they have been placed at the school. They have a strong understanding of the barriers pupils face to learning and achieving well. High-quality record keeping underpins this work and enables staff to plan successfully to meet pupils' individual needs. You reflect carefully on which approaches will have the most positive impact on overcoming pupils' barriers to learning. Where appropriate, you draw on the expertise from external organisations to maximise the impact of the school's work. For example, you commissioned input from a performing arts company to strengthen the quality of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Since the last inspection, you have introduced effective systems for supporting the social and emotional development of your pupils. This was an area for improvement in your last inspection, which you have successfully addressed. All pupils now have access to counselling and mentoring on a regular basis and you are beginning to measure the impact of this

work.

Alongside supporting pupils' pastoral needs, leaders have successfully secured continuous improvements in the quality of teaching. Staff use their knowledge of pupils to plan activities that are well matched to their abilities. Pupils attempt interesting tasks that typically help them to make good gains in their skills and knowledge. Similarly, pupils work hard because staff have high expectations of what they can achieve, including what they wish to do when they leave school.

You and the management committee have taken effective action since the previous inspection to secure new accommodation for the school. It is fit for purpose, pleasant and well maintained. The management committee continually reviews governance arrangements so that it provides leaders with appropriate support and challenge.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There are effective systems in place that help to keep pupils and staff safe while on the site. Staff and pupils understand and follow these systems. For example, during an unplanned fire drill, inspectors observed how staff and pupils evacuated the building quickly and calmly. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school.

All staff receive regular and effective training in safeguarding, and know how to report any concerns that they may have. Leaders and staff have a strong awareness of different factors that represent a risk to pupils' safety. This includes issues that pupils may face outside school, such as gang involvement or knife crime. Leaders assess potential risks carefully and provide pupils with helpful guidance on how they can minimise these risks.

Detailed record keeping enables leaders and staff to build a thorough understanding of pupils' needs and to identify swiftly those who are vulnerable to abuse or harm. All staff meet daily to discuss how best to support pupils' progress and welfare. This contributes to a calm and orderly environment that is conducive to pupils' learning and well-being. Leaders and staff follow up any concerns promptly. They work effectively with a wide range of external agencies, including the local authority, to promote pupils' welfare.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to look at how effectively the school checks that pupils are making strong progress in a range of subjects. This was an area of improvement at the previous inspection. Many of the pupils have had significant disruption to their education for a wide range of complex reasons.
- You have a number of effective systems in place to monitor pupils' progress. When pupils join the school, staff carry out checks of pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use this information effectively to plan interesting activities that meet pupils' needs.
- Crucially, leaders and teachers effectively check how well pupils are learning in

subjects other than English and mathematics. Assessment systems are straightforward and understood well by staff. This enables leaders and teachers to set challenging goals for individual pupils as well as provide swift support to those pupils who are underachieving. Your plans for improvement show that leaders are rightly exploring how you can strengthen these systems still further.

- Since the previous inspection, you have prioritised improving pupils' good mental health and emotional resilience. Leaders have adapted the curriculum to ensure that due weight is placed on raising pupils' self-esteem and ability to overcome challenges. This is a good example of how you are considering the wider outcomes necessary for pupils' future success. I found that you and your staff are acutely aware of the barriers that many of your pupils experience in securing employment or education when they leave the school. Together, you are taking effective steps to address this. School information shows that most pupils move on to suitable training, education or work.
- Typically, the majority of pupils who attend the school are boys. Recently, the school has admitted an increasing number of girls. Therefore, we agreed to check to see whether there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school, that ensures that girls and boys feel equally safe.
- Inspectors spent time talking to a range of pupils, including girls. All pupils said that they felt safe at the school. Leaders and staff also agree that pupils are safe. Senior leaders and the management committee are aware that there are gang influences in the area and that on occasions this makes pupils feel unsafe on their journey to and from school. Successful strategies to address this have included work with external agencies and different start and finish times for some pupils.
- The school's self-evaluation indicates that improving pupils' attendance remains a priority. I agree with your view that good attendance at the school will have a significant impact on your pupils' opportunities for success in the next stage of their education or employment. For this reason, we agreed to see how well the school prepares pupils for their future education and work.
- Since the previous inspection, you have broadened your curriculum offer. Pupils benefit from good experiences which generally reflect their needs and interests. For example, pupils in an art class showed high levels of focus and enjoyment and did not want the session to end. One pupil said, 'I like being a student here at CBC. I like art, science and maths. I am going to study business at college.' Another pupil took time to show me some of his artwork on display; he shared his clear plans to get an apprenticeship and follow his career goals. You understand the importance of having a flexible curriculum offer, because of changing needs of pupils. You have clear ambitions to continue to reflect the interests and aspirations of your pupils more closely, for example through increasing the range of work-related courses on offer. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of this initiative.
- Leaders work effectively with families and external agencies to support pupils who are not attending school as often as they should. This includes making sure that pupils are safe if they are absent. Well-chosen rewards motivate pupils to attend regularly. While strategies to improve attendance are having an impact,

absence rates for some pupils remain too high. This puts them at a disadvantage in terms of effective preparation for their future education or training. Although leaders use external services well, more needs to be done to find innovative solutions tailored to individual pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the good practice for supporting pupils' well-being is disseminated more widely across the school
- the curriculum is strengthened still further to ensure that it meets pupils' interests and aspirations more closely
- attendance continues to improve so that pupils make the best use of their time in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Pocock
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your deputy, a representative from the management committee, a representative from the local authority and external agencies that the school works with. Inspectors visited classrooms, with some visits being conducted jointly with you. Together with leaders, inspectors reviewed pupils' work to evaluate their learning over time. Meetings were held with pupils to talk about their views of the school. Inspectors also held meetings with both teaching and non-teaching staff to hear their views, and took account of the two responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff informally throughout the inspection. A range of documentation was evaluated, including safeguarding documentation, attendance information, exclusion information, the school's own self-evaluation, plans for development and information about pupils' progress. Letters of thanks and praise from ex-pupils and parents were also considered. No responses were received to Ofsted's surveys for pupils or parents.