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15 December 2017

Mr Nigel Barrow
Principal
Shirley High School Performing Arts College
Shirley Church Road
Croydon
Surrey
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Dear Mr Barrow

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Shirley High School Performing Arts College

Following my visit to your school on 30 November 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 school.

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 school.

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 not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

There are 1,052 pupils on roll at the school. The proportion of pupils representing minority ethnic groups is higher than average. More pupils than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. Pupils usually stay at the school for most, if not all, of their secondary education and the stability of the pupil population is higher than national levels.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders' actions to secure high standards of behaviour both in and out of the classroom have not been effective.

During this inspection, inspectors found that pupils' movement around the school between lessons is frequently boisterous and noisy. While generally good-natured, exchanges between some pupils are sometimes disruptive and impolite to others. Routines, for example for safe movement up and down stairs, are not well established. Staff supervision does not ensure pupils' orderly and responsible behaviour. Inspectors witnessed poor behaviour including pupils sliding down bannisters, rowdiness and shouting in lessons and corridors. Leaders' records and accounts from staff and pupils indicate that inspectors experienced a typical day in the school.

Teachers do not uphold consistently the school's expectations for the '5*' greeting for the starts of lessons. In too many instances, lessons do not start smoothly; pupils are slow to settle and there is considerable delay in their embarking on learning activities. Similarly, there are not well-established routines for the way some lessons end.

Where teachers' expectations of their pupils' behaviour are high, pupils are attentive, respectful and focused well on their studies. However, when teachers' expectations are not high enough, pupils' disruptive behaviour goes unchallenged; they are distracted from their work and their attitude to learning is poor.

Leaders are aware that the incidence of poor behaviour resulting in seclusion (pupils working away from their class group for one or more days) and exclusions is too high. Leaders' records show that in 2016/17 there were 135 serious incidents of poor behaviour, which included violent or aggressive behaviour and verbal abuse. Some pupils reported to inspectors that fighting among pupils occurs frequently. An inspector observed a fight between pupils during the inspection. Staff dealt with this effectively.

Leaders keep well-organised records of pupils' behaviour, such as the issuing of sanctions. Leaders' recording and analysis of incidents is thorough and extensive, resulting in revised policies and increased interventions. This work enables leaders

to identify patterns of behaviour and consequent support needs for individuals and groups. Leaders, sensibly, organise a range of preventative work including with the school liaison officer as well as sessions led by outside organisations. These actions have led to improvements in the first half term of this academic year, with a decrease in rates of isolation (a pupil's temporary removal from lessons) and exclusion. However, while recognising that the use of seclusion instead of fixed-term exclusion is a better arrangement for some pupils, this has now increased.

Leaders have raised awareness with staff, parents and pupils of the importance of being on time to school and individual lessons. Actions taken so far have meant that the school is on track to meet its punctuality targets. Nevertheless, this does not represent an improvement on last year.

There are some clear strengths in leaders' work to support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. Pupils' attendance to school is above average. The persistent absence of groups of pupils and individuals has decreased as a result of the school's work with families and outside agencies. Pupils are well versed in, and adhere to, the well-established policy not to have their mobile phones in school. Pupils know the importance of their planners as a source of reference and for recording important information such as homework and notes of absence. While there is not a consistent approach to this expected use of planners in lessons, pupils have them ready to use when called upon to do so by their teachers. Pupils are generally well equipped for their lessons.

Pupils report that they feel safe travelling to and from school. They are alert to local risks including the busy traffic close to the school. Inspectors note that pupils behave responsibly as they leave the school at the end of the day, including on their walk to bus stops. At breaktimes, pupils generally socialise well in different parts of the school site. They are usually respectful of the designated quiet areas and those for playing games. The canteen is very busy at breaktime and lunchtime. Given the constraints of the available space, pupils queue for their lunch for long periods of time. Many deserve praise for their patience on the day of the inspection, waiting in the cold. Some pupils treated their peers with a lack of courtesy as they moved into the queue.

Pupils who met formally with me were impressive in their loyalty and are a credit to the school. They are articulate and mature in their discussions. These included prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors and the student council, who enjoy taking on these responsibilities. They receive appropriate training and present strong role models for their peers. Pupils can describe ways in which individuals are helped to improve their behaviour and attitude towards school through the support of mentors.

The single central record indicates that leaders ensure that all required checks of staff are made when they join the school. Staff receive the required safeguarding training, including on the 'Prevent' duty. They are also trained in their delivery of topics to be covered in personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils receive information and guidance on their personal development and welfare in lessons, tutor times,

assemblies and special events. Pupils are familiar with different types of bullying. They are alert to the risks of cyberbullying and how to keep safe when working online. Tutor-time themes include rights and responsibilities; citizenship; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and the use of prejudicial language.

Since the last inspection, leaders have reviewed the behaviour policy. You instigated this in response to a small number of instances of low-level disruption in lessons reported at the last inspection. You were aware of there being some inconsistency in how well teachers used the behaviour policy. You responded to feedback from pupils, staff and governors to help improve this situation.

Leaders worked with pupils, such as the anti-bullying ambassadors, to produce a 'pupil-friendly' version of the anti-bullying policy to be included in pupils' planners. This enabled pupils to be very clear on leaders' expectations of behaviour and the rewards and sanctions stipulated in the behaviour policy. You ensured that all staff had read and understood the revised policy and recognised their collective responsibility for keeping pupils safe and ensuring that they behave well. You provided appropriate training and guidance for all staff and individual teachers as needed. This aimed to ensure that all adults in the school have a full appreciation of, and use fairly, the escalating scale of sanctions for the increasing seriousness of incidents; you anticipated that behaviour would improve as a result of this strategy.

While there have been some improvements in the first half term of this academic year in the reduction of isolations and exclusions, overall the implementation of the behaviour policy is inconsistent. Pupils' positive experiences of others' attitudes and behaviour varies substantially. Leaders' endeavours and raised expectations for the effective implementation of the behaviour policy have not translated into consistently positive attitudes to learning, nor have they achieved a consistently purposeful, calm and respectful atmosphere across the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that teachers have consistently and persistently high expectations for their pupils' positive attitudes to learning
- Ensure that strategies integral to the behaviour policy are effective in reducing incidents of poor behaviour and in promoting positive, respectful and orderly conduct

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector