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Mark Dale-Emberton
Principal
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Dear Mr Dale-Emberton

Short inspection of Charlton Park Academy

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 2017 with Sue Bzikot, 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. Through the development of a skilled team of senior and middle leaders, you have taken effective steps to strengthen leadership and management. The governing body's recent appointment of an experienced deputy vice principal has increased leadership capacity further. Leaders at all levels are united in their vision to provide 'learners with an exemplary education'.

Leaders share an accurate view of the school's performance. Your reorganisation of leaders' roles and responsibilities has increased the rigour with which they check and improve standards across the school, particularly in English and mathematics. Leaders work together closely to address the areas that need to be better and ensure that pupils receive the guidance and teaching they need to achieve well. Although you have great confidence in your team's leadership skills, you hold them to account fully for the impact of their work. As a result, the school is good and improving.

The school provides a welcoming and calm environment, in which your aim of 'creating successful and happy learners' shines through. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is a strong feature of the school. They try hard and are rightly proud of their achievements. The stimulating curriculum provides the foundations for pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils benefit from an exciting range of extra-curricular activities, with something on offer for everyone, including bee-keeping and dance. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate adults' hard work to 'make school fun'.

Leaders and teachers work well with external agencies to understand how best to

support pupils' achievement. These effective partnerships, combined with typically good teaching, are the basis for pupils' strong outcomes. The vast majority of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics during their time at Charlton Park. However, leaders' work to evaluate pupils' progress in other subjects is in its infancy. Consequently, leaders do not have sufficiently detailed information to check that pupils reach their full potential in all the subjects they study.

Strengthening communication with parents and carers is a key priority for you and your team. Parents that spoke to inspectors value the recent changes you have made. They particularly appreciate how the school's pastoral team offer them support when they need it and resolve any concerns they might have. Nevertheless, inspectors agree with the small number of parents who think there is still room for improvement in the way the school communicates with families.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors regularly review and strengthen school procedures to ensure that safeguarding remains the upmost priority. For example, you have recently increased the number of deputy designated leads. They work together effectively with the designated lead to oversee and promote pupils' safety and welfare.

Leaders and staff undertake regular training so they have the knowledge and skills necessary to keep pupils safe. They are aware of the latest statutory guidance as well as the ways in which pupils' needs may increase their risk of harm. Safeguarding posters placed in every room promote a culture of vigilance and reinforce adults' understanding of what they must do if they have a concern.

Leaders have implemented a new system for recording and reporting concerns about pupils' well-being. Staff understand and use these procedures consistently. In this way, leaders receive timely and accurate information in order to identify and protect vulnerable pupils. When appropriate, leaders seek input from families and external agencies to assess and plan for pupils' needs as soon as any issues arise.

Throughout the day, staff keep a careful eye on pupils' welfare and take all the necessary steps to keep them safe. Lunchtimes are well supervised so that pupils make the most of their social times together. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school and are well supported by staff.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry considered the impact of leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and well-being. I particularly evaluated how the school equipped pupils with the skills and attitudes they need to learn and achieve well.
- Since the previous inspection, you have introduced a new approach to securing high standards of behaviour. This approach is proving to be successful. In order to plan for pupils' needs, leaders invest time in finding out as much information as possible about a pupil. They use this information to devise carefully tailored programmes of guidance

and support. This means that staff know exactly what to do to help pupils feel secure and overcome their barriers to learning. Staff foster pupils' self-esteem and encourage them to work out for themselves how to complete a task successfully. As a result, pupils are keen to try new activities and make improvements to their work, even if they make a mistake or get stuck. Staff who spoke to inspectors agree that the school's new approach has improved pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

- Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour and well-being rigorously to ensure that strategies are making a positive difference. If pupils need extra help, leaders ensure that they receive it without delay. Staff have the expertise to manage incidents of challenging behaviour confidently. Their calm, consistent manner helps pupils refocus quickly on their learning. Pupils typically know how to adapt their behaviour to different situations. They are considerate and friendly to each other and to adults.
- Pupils benefit from a range of well-chosen activities to develop their physical and emotional well-being. For example, they practise riding bikes, learn outdoors frequently and take part in exciting sports activities during lunchtimes. Leaders and staff rightly focus on enabling pupils to become as independent as possible. Drawing astutely on advice from external specialists, staff build pupils' physical mobility in meaningful and relevant contexts, such as playing with a friend or having lunch with their peers.
- You explained that leaders are developing assessment systems to build an in-depth picture of pupils' achievement in all aspects of their learning. For this reason, my second line of enquiry explored the impact of this work and how staff use assessment information to plan for and meet pupils' needs.
- In English and mathematics, leaders have established effective ways for teachers to measure and assess pupils' outcomes. Teachers are skilled in recognising small but important gains in pupils' skills and knowledge. They work closely with therapists to agree pupils' targets and plan activities that focus on what pupils need to learn next and make good progress.
- Leaders' oversight of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is strong. Pupils who are not making as much progress as they could are spotted quickly. Together with staff, leaders put in place targeted interventions so that pupils do not fall behind. However, school procedures for evaluating pupils' outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics are embryonic. Although leaders know how many pupils attain qualifications in each subject, they do not have sufficiently detailed information on how much progress pupils have made. This prevents leaders from systematically checking that pupils achieve to the very best of their abilities in all the subjects they study.
- Leaders evaluate the curriculum as a strength of the school. Therefore, the final line of enquiry tested out the quality of the curriculum and its contribution to pupils' outcomes, including their readiness for life outside the school.
- Leaders have placed the development of pupils' language and communication skills at the heart of the curriculum. As a result, pupils' achievement in English is strong. Staff make the most of every opportunity to help pupils communicate and voice their opinions. The success of this approach is rooted in adults' consistent use of communication strategies, incorporating photographs, symbols or words according to

pupils' individual needs and abilities. As a result, pupils not only understand what is expected of them but also are keen to share their views. Equally, staff routinely challenge the most able pupils to record their ideas in writing, both in English and in other subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils wrote summaries of how they made a pewter key ring.

- In mathematics, leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum across key stages 3 and 4. Due attention is now given to developing pupils' understanding in a full range of mathematical concepts, such as shape, space and measure. Leaders have also ensured that pupils are taught to use their calculation skills in real-life contexts and practical situations. For example, pupils visit the supermarket and work out the cost of the items they want to buy. School assessment information and work in pupils' books show this approach is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- When designing the curriculum, leaders pay careful attention to offering subjects and qualifications which motivate pupils to learn and nurture their aspirations. Art is a particular strength of the school, which is reflected in the growing number of pupils who obtain an A level or GCSE qualification in this subject.
- Pupils are joining the school with a more complex range of needs than has previously been the case. Leaders are determined that all pupils, irrespective of their needs or starting points, obtain qualifications which recognise their skills and achievements. You and your team are innovative in finding solutions in the best interests of pupils. For example, leaders design bespoke schemes of work and then secure external accreditation in subjects such as design and technology.
- In the sixth form, students follow a highly personalised curriculum. This enables them to make good gains in their knowledge and skills and attain a range of qualifications and certificates, such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. Students' successful preparation for life beyond the school is underpinned by effective programmes to develop their independent living and work-related skills. Through close liaison with further education providers, external agencies and a careers guidance service, leaders ensure that students are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of the school's work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- effective procedures are in place to keep parents fully up to date on all aspects of their children's education
- in all curriculum subjects, pupils' progress is checked and planned for systematically, so that they achieve the best possible outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Murphy-Dutton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and senior leaders to discuss your evaluation of the school's performance, including pupils' achievement and the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors visited lessons in each key stage and reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their experiences at the school and met with members of the school council. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. Documentation related to safeguarding and behaviour was scrutinised, including pupils' individual behaviour plans and the school's single central record of vetting checks on staff. A meeting was held with a group of staff and inspectors considered eight responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. An inspector met with members of the governing body and held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority, the school's improvement partner and an external organisation which provides careers guidance for pupils. Inspectors took into account the views of parents through the 10 responses to Parent View, including six written comments. Telephone conversations were also held with three parents.