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Ms Mary Isherwood
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Dear Ms Isherwood

Short inspection of Camberwell Park Specialist Support School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018 with Elaine White, 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 outstanding in June 2013.

The school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are a dynamic school leader with high expectations, who leads by example. There is a strong sense of school improvement never standing still in your school. This has resulted in it going from strength to strength. You are ably assisted by your assured, enthusiastic leadership team.

There is a shared sense of passion for ensuring that your pupils receive the very best education. You have created an environment of care and nurture that radiates through the whole school community. This is a school full of smiles and laughter. Together with staff, parents and carers and pupils, you are rightly proud of being part of Camberwell Park. You break down barriers to learning, ensuring that pupils feel safe and confident to flourish, both academically and in their personal development.

The very large majority of parents who spoke to inspectors, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are very positive about the school and 'cannot praise the staff enough'. Parents spoken to said that their children are happy and have 'come on in leaps and bounds'. Many described the school as 'amazing' and said that communication is excellent. They also said that staff are 'approachable and caring' and 'go the extra mile' to meet their child's needs.

The vast majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire enjoy

being part of the team at Camberwell Park and feel that the school is extremely well led and managed. Staff share your aspirations for pupils and wholeheartedly endorse the calm, orderly and loving culture that has been created. There is a strong sense of the staff team working to achieve the very best for pupils. Everyone in the school lives up to your school acronym, 'PROUD', by being 'Passionate', 'Respectful', 'Organised', 'Understanding' and 'Dedicated'.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need for you to make sure that teaching assistants provide an excellent blend of support and challenge to pupils. This was to enable pupils to sustain their excellent progress. You have tackled this area of development with enthusiasm and success. You introduced a set of skill requirements for teaching assistants. You then used these to measure their strengths and development needs in appraisal reviews. Teaching assistants are regularly offered opportunities for professional development and training. This can lead to their taking on additional roles and responsibilities in the school. The work in this area is having a very positive impact on their contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils benefit from skilled and knowledgeable teaching assistants supporting and challenging them. During the inspection, all adults seen knew pupils extremely well and used this information adeptly to encourage and draw out their learning. They asked questions that appropriately challenged pupils, but equally adults knew when to pull back, distract a pupil and then, in a positive and nurturing way, re-engage them in their activity. Your monitoring of the work of teaching assistants provides compelling evidence of their confident contribution to pupils making excellent progress. You recognise teaching assistants' skills in meeting individual pupils' needs, such as by their strong behaviour management skills; the support they offer in effectively moving pupils from whole group to small groups and their demonstrating high expectations.

Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers know pupils extremely well. They use detailed assessments to track progress and to plan meticulously for each individual pupil's learning needs. As a result, a large majority of pupils make outstanding progress through key stages 1 and 2. The impact of moving to the new school in January 2016, which affected the in-year progress of a small number of key stage 1 pupils, has now lessened, and these pupils are back on track towards making strong progress. The exceptional relationships that adults have with pupils shine through every interaction and ensure that pupils trust staff completely to care for them and support their learning. As one pupil commented, 'I like my teachers so much.' Adults in the school are 'kind and are always there to help me'. Activities are stimulating and fun. For example, during the inspection pupils were full of excitement to learn about how chocolate is made. The teacher animatedly explained to pupils that they were first going to find cocoa beans. The discovery of the beans was met with whoops of joy, claps and delighted faces.

You have very recently acquired and set up a second school site that, at present, accommodates a small number of early years children and a larger group of key stage 1 pupils. You and your staff have worked hard to set the same high standards as in the main school. However, I agree with you that there is still more work to be

done to ensure that there is the same ambiance, consistency and continuity of practice across both sites.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that pupils are in a safe and secure environment by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding records are rigorously kept, are detailed and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken frequently and is up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Your vigilance, and that of your leadership team, in care and support of vulnerable pupils is of the highest standard. Leaders have extremely effective relationships with external agencies and are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils in your care.

Pupils said they feel very safe and well cared for in the school. They feel confident that adults will help them if needed. Older pupils talked with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, personally and online. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep children safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- Assessment information is rigorously collected by leaders to track the progress of pupils and ensure that they are making as much progress as possible. Individual dips in pupils' progress are picked up quickly and acted on to ensure that pupils are back on track as soon as possible. For example, it was noticed that some disadvantaged pupils were not making as much progress as they could in developing their speaking skills. Pupils' individual targets were altered to reflect their needs, and activities were quickly set up to provide more opportunities for them to be encouraged in their speech and vocabulary. The accuracy and consistency of assessment information are regularly checked within the school and across local schools and are compared to regional special school and national standards.
- You offer a high-quality curriculum to pupils. It is both motivating and exciting. In addition to English and mathematics, you offer a rich, imaginative and varied learning experience that significantly contributes to developing pupils' self-belief, confidence, personal development and life skills. For example, the school has introduced a school therapy dog, called Dora. As well as offering affection and comfort, Dora helps pupils in a variety of ways. Pupils who struggle with their reading read to Dora. This relaxes them and builds confidence in their reading skills. The way in which pupils' individual education, health and care (EHC) plans are tightly linked to the curriculum is a strength. The school has worked hard with the local authority and very closely with parents and pupils to ensure that these plans are highly meaningful and relevant. For example, they link the targets to the personal goals of pupils and parents, such as by pupils being able to take part in a special family event or play with their siblings. These goals are

then broken down into small achievable steps, and a personalised curriculum is developed to enable the pupil to work towards achieving the goals.

- Transition at the different stages of a pupil's school career is comprehensive and thorough. It is personalised to the needs of the pupil and family and conducted with care and sensitivity. The transition of Year 6 pupils to Year 7 is enhanced by the strong relationships that the school has with receiving schools. Regular visits are arranged to the new school. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their hopes and anxieties, so that by the time they move up to secondary school they, and their parents, are excited and ready for the move.
- There is a wealth of strengths evident at Camberwell Park. During my brief time with you, I found you to be an exemplary leader. You have an accurate, reflective and honest view of the school's strengths and priorities. The governing body is highly effective. Its expertise, ability to challenge and passion for the success of every pupil make an important contribution towards the strong practice that is evident in the school.
- The outreach support you offer to 49 primary schools is of the highest quality. These schools find your support for them and their pupils invaluable. As well as other activities, you invite schools to walk around Camberwell Park to observe how pupils learn and see different approaches to teaching, developing communication and using resources. This has helped staff in other schools to follow the advice they have been given and succeed with their pupils in their own schools. Your exceptional work in this area was recently recognised by the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN), which has awarded you an 'Excellent Practice in Special School Award'.
- Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning and behave extremely well around the school. They love school and said that they like 'being with friends'. A typical sentiment from pupils was, 'We always try to do good work.' The importance the school places on helping pupils find their voice is a real strength. To this end, a priority for all pupils is to develop a means of communication. This may be through speaking, using signs and symbols, using a communication board or eye pointing. Consequently, all pupils contribute to school life by being encouraged to express their feelings, make choices and decisions and influence what happens to them, their peers and their school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to establish the new early years and key stage 1 site, so that it offers the same consistently high standards as the rest of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, inspectors met with you, your deputy headteachers, your assistant headteacher and the school business manager. An inspector also met with the early years lead, the school counsellor and the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records. I met with one governor, and spoke to the chair of the governing body and a parent governor on the telephone. We also spoke on the telephone to your school improvement partner and a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) from another school to discuss the outreach support they receive from you. We visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and assessment books. We took account of the 31 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of three parents who talked with an inspector before the school day. We took account of the 46 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke with staff during the day. We met with two small groups of pupils. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. We looked at school documents, including information about pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, behaviour and incident logs and documents relating to safeguarding.