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Mrs Sue Tripp
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Tripp

Short inspection of West Lea School

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 2018 with Her Majesty's Inspector Gaynor Roberts, 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have sustained a culture of ambition and high standards through a period of significant change. The number of pupils on roll has rapidly increased, many leaders and staff are recent appointments, and the school has a number of new sites.

You have taken on the role of executive headteacher, and oversee all of the West Lea provision, including the work of outreach teams and support for other providers. Shortly after the last inspection, you recruited an associate headteacher to manage the school. Together, you have overseen the expansion of the school and worked to ensure that the West Lea ethos is evident in all the settings.

You have worked effectively with the local authority to make provision for pupils who have been out of school, and those who require support in other schools. You have also worked effectively with the local authority to develop a supported internship programme. This programme is growing steadily, both in the number of participants and in the number of businesses providing placements. West Lea now caters for pupils with a very diverse range of needs.

During this expansion, you and the associate headteacher have ensured that the high-quality of education pupils receive continues to be maintained. You have built capacity through restructuring and recruiting people with the skills needed.

Leaders are very proud of the supported internship programme. In order to prepare the pupils for this, and to ensure that pupils get the most out of this, independence has become a key focus across the whole school. Travel training is widely promoted along with independent learning. Parents and carers attending the coffee morning reported that they were challenged to let their children do something on their own, and they sometimes felt uncomfortable doing this. However, they expressed their gratitude to the school staff for challenging them because it enabled their children to become more independent.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is evident across the school. You have ensured that the school's systems and practice are fit for purpose and consistent across all school sites. Leaders make sure that all the required checks are completed when employing staff. Parents reported that their children feel safe at school. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe and they know who to go to if they have a concern. They were confident that any issues would be dealt with. Responses to pupil and parent questionnaires also support these comments.

You and your leadership team are aware that the new groups of pupils attending the school are potentially more vulnerable. You have ensured that staff are aware of the specific risks these groups are exposed to. Leaders have completed comprehensive risk assessments to support pupils' safety when accessing the community.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to look at pupils' attendance. This was because the school's attendance figures are well below the national average. Leaders have put in place effective systems to secure improvements in attendance. Individual cases are discussed at weekly meetings, and senior leaders are held to account for improvements made by pupils from each key stage.
- Pupils have a very diverse range of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Some have been out of school for a period of time. Strategies for addressing poor attendance are tailored to the individual pupil's situation. Staff know who these pupils are and support them well. Leaders have worked effectively with parents, setting up attendance clinics, for example. Staff also provide targeted support at home to encourage pupils to come into school. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to support attendance; for example, alternative transport arrangements have been made to support some pupils which is enabling them to attend school. As a result of these strategies, pupils with a history of very poor attendance quickly become regular attenders following their arrival at West Lea.
- We next considered how effective the curriculum is in preparing pupils for adulthood. This is because leaders had highlighted the development of pupils' independence skills as an area of focus.
- Overall, the curriculum is well designed to meet pupils' needs. At all key stages,

the curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. You have recently introduced supported internships for the oldest pupils. They are successfully engaging with the world of work and many are going on to employment.

- Independence and basic skills are key aspects of the curriculum at all key stages. However, curriculum delivery is more effective at some key stages than others. The needs of the least able are not always addressed, particularly at key stage 3. This is because the quality of teaching in these classes is not of the consistently high standard as it is in the rest of the school.
- Finally, we looked at how effective the school is in providing clear information to stakeholders. This was identified as an area for improvement, at the last inspection. Staff and governors readily explained the use of the school's online systems for collecting and reporting a wide range of information. There are effective processes in place for sharing information with a range of audiences. The reports provided to leaders and governors are succinct and clear.
- Leaders regularly collect information on pupils' progress. Standardised testing is used alongside teacher assessment where you feel it is appropriate. All information is recorded and shared with parents at parents' meetings. Governors are planning to attend some of these meetings to extend their understanding of the assessment process.
- Behaviour incidents and rewards are recorded using the same system. Behaviour plans are put in place for those pupils who require them.
- Leaders provide governors with regular and helpful reports on pupils' achievement and behaviour with examples of interventions that leaders put in place to provide additional support. As a result, parents and governors are well informed about the progress pupils are making at school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum is delivered through consistently high-quality teaching, particularly for the least able key stage 3 pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Penny Barratt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the associate headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors visited classrooms with senior leaders and met with staff and pupils throughout the day. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and information about their progress. They met with a group of governors and representatives from the local authority. They also looked at parent and staff questionnaire responses.

Inspectors scrutinised assessment information, school improvement planning, behaviour records, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.