

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



23 April 2018

Mr Andy Rehling  
Headteacher  
Mayfield School  
Pedley Road  
Dagenham  
Essex  
RM8 1XE

Dear Mr Rehling

### **Short inspection of Mayfield School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2018 with Annie Gammon and Hayley Follett, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement, which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You, governors and your senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, leaders' evaluation of strategies implemented to address areas for improvement is not sharp enough. As a result, some areas are not showing sufficient improvement, for example the achievement of boys. There is much to celebrate in the school. Progress overall for pupils in English, mathematics, humanities and modern foreign languages is good. This is in contrast to the progress that pupils make in science. Pupils' attitudes around school and in class are positive, and they behave well. Pupils feel safe and they speak positively about the support they receive from many teachers.

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with ensuring that teachers consistently plan work of the right level of difficulty so that pupils are appropriately challenged. Girls' progress is now well above the national average and progress for the lower- and middle-ability pupils is now good. However, you identify that there is more work to be done. Levels of challenge and expectations are not consistently high, especially for boys and the most able pupils. You also recognise that too many disadvantaged pupils are absent from school more often than other pupils.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

There are many strengths in the procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. All staff are well trained and know how they should react if they have concerns about a pupil's well-being. Senior leaders have very effective systems for managing and monitoring pupils who may, for whatever reason, be more vulnerable than most to potential dangers. Key staff maintain good relationships with external agencies, who intervene and support when required.

Procedures to recruit suitable staff meet requirements. Pupils are provided with learning opportunities so they know how to keep themselves safe. These include understanding potential dangers from social media and from within their local communities.

Poor attendance for some of the most vulnerable pupils limits the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, because it is significantly more difficult for staff to ensure that pupils are safe when they do not attend school.

## **Inspection findings**

- Inspectors looked at the impact of strategies to improve outcomes in science. This was because the 2017 examination results and progress scores for pupils of all abilities were significantly below national figures. You have addressed the staffing turbulence in the department, and leaders have implemented a number of strategies to improve outcomes. You recognise that it will take time before the full impact of these strategies is realised.
- From joint observations, senior leaders and inspectors concluded that classroom activities in science do not sufficiently challenge pupils to reach their potential. We found that questioning does not always deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently. Scrutiny of pupils' work in books indicates that pupils are not making good progress over time. This is particularly the case for boys. Teachers do not consistently apply the school's feedback policy. In addition, teachers' expectations for the presentation and completion of work are not high enough. As a result, in science, pupils, particularly boys, the most able and disadvantaged pupils, are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- In English and mathematics, teachers use assessment data to plan activities that appropriately challenge most pupils. Teachers use questioning more effectively in these subjects than in science to probe learning and deepen understanding. Work in books shows that teachers have high expectations. Consequently, the majority of pupils make good progress. You recognise that in science the most able pupils would benefit from an increased level of challenge in order to make substantial progress.
- You have rightly prioritised the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This is because 2017 examination results showed that their progress had dipped from 2016 across a range of subjects. In the best lessons, teachers are aware that this group of pupils is a key priority for the school. They understand the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face, and offer them extra support. School assessment

information shows that disadvantaged pupils are now making improved progress, particularly in English.

- Overall attendance has been broadly in line with the national average in recent years. However, too many disadvantaged pupils are absent too frequently. Despite an extensive range of strategies, persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils remains high and is not decreasing quickly enough. Lack of attendance at school for this group of pupils is having a detrimental effect on their education, both in their learning and in their personal development.
- The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. They recognise that they have a key role in ensuring that boys, the most able and disadvantaged pupils make better progress and attend every day.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders more rigorously evaluate the strategies adopted to improve the school
- they continue to improve teaching, particularly in science, so that it is less variable in quality and more typically as good as the best practice in the school
- different rates of progress made by groups of pupils diminish, including the progress of boys, most-able and disadvantaged pupils
- persistent absence improves, particularly for disadvantaged 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 Redbridge. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Dickinson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspectors carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with you, senior leaders and the chair of governors
- a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority
- joint visits to classrooms with senior leaders
- a scrutiny of pupils' work with senior leaders
- discussions with pupils
- discussions with staff
- observations of pupils' behaviour around the school and during break and lunchtime

- consideration of 42 parental responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, 89 responses to the staff survey and 173 pupil survey responses
- a scrutiny of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, governors' minutes, safeguarding records and policies, pupil performance and attendance data.