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Mr Paul Murphy
Headteacher
The Ravensbourne School
Hayes Lane
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Dear Mr Murphy

Short inspection of The Ravensbourne School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 2018 with Jason Hughes and Laurence King, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your commitment to the school is unwavering. You and your leaders evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development well, and you are not complacent. You told me that you believe the school is 'strong', but that 'it's not as good as it can be' as you are always seeking to improve. You have created an ethos in which the school motto, 'Be the best you can be', pervades the school.

You and your senior leadership team have created a calm and orderly environment where pupils behave well. Routines for pupil conduct are clearly in place, and pupils take pride in their work and their appearance.

Since the last inspection, you, governors and trustees have taken effective action to develop ways to check the quality of the school's work, and you now measure the impact of this accurately.

Pupils' outcomes at GCSE show significant progress for the open subjects, and for low prior attainers. Persistent absence is well below the national average.

The local governing body and trust provide effective support and challenge to the school. They possess a very high level of skill. They are mindful of the need to offer appropriate support as the school converts into a multi-academy trust, and you move into a new role.

Staff are very supportive of your vision and your actions. They appreciate senior leaders'

support and the personal development opportunities with which they are provided. Staff particularly appreciate the links that you and senior leaders have made with other schools and subject experts. One member of staff said: 'We have lots of opportunities; senior leaders are really receptive, and we really want to improve.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are in line with statutory requirements. You and your leaders check carefully that staff are suitable to work with pupils, and trustees monitor this carefully. Staff receive regular up-to-date training on how to keep children safe. Those who join the school mid-year are provided with an induction programme, which focuses on safeguarding. Your team is persistent in its actions to work closely with external agencies to keep vulnerable pupils safe and offer them timely support.

Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe and how to report bullying. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they feel that the school is safe and that the buddy programme, 'Big brother, big sister', provides them with a safe haven. Visiting speakers such as the police and mental health experts work with the pupils on how to look after themselves in a range of situations.

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, four areas of focus were agreed.

- The first of these was to look at pupils' progress and outcomes in GCSE science. This is because outcomes for all pupils in science have been below the national average for two years, and their progress has been significantly below. You acknowledge that there have been staffing and recruitment issues in this subject area. However, there is now a more stable team of science teachers in place. You and senior leaders are providing effective support for the new science leader. A detailed review of the science curriculum has taken place, and teachers work effectively together to plan their lessons. This provides greater consistency of teaching across the department. Some pupils commented positively that they have seen improvements in the teaching of science. Consequently, pupils' progress in this area has improved.
- The second area of focus was looking at the progress that disadvantaged, middle prior attainers and most-able pupils make in mathematics. For the last two years, these pupils have made less progress than pupils nationally. Your senior leadership team and leader for mathematics have a clear vision of how to improve teaching. They have put into place a precise plan of action to secure improvements in pupils' learning. Tracking of pupils' progress is thorough, as are the transition arrangements from primary school. This information provides teachers with accurate information about what the pupils know already, and what their next steps in learning should be. Effective planning, targeted interventions and the good use of other adults in the classroom were evident in the lessons observed. As a result, current pupils make better progress, irrespective of their starting points. Information provided by the school and work in pupils' books show that the progress of pupils in mathematics is now in line with the progress that pupils make in their other subjects.

- Thirdly, we agreed to explore the progress of disadvantaged pupils. In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should. You have instigated a range of strategies, such as mentoring and one-to-one tutoring. Additional resources are provided so that disadvantaged pupils can access examination revision guides and homework placed on the school's computer system. All class teachers are aware of who the disadvantaged pupils in their classes are, and they regularly discuss their progress and possible interventions with leaders. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are now making progress in line with that of pupils nationally.
- The final area of focus for the inspection was the progress of higher and middle prior attainers in academic A-level courses. This was because progress at A level has been below the national average for the past three years. You have a strong leader in place in the sixth form. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of 16–19 study programmes and have implemented a number of actions to secure improvements. These include closer work with examination boards, a review of subject curricula and development of teaching resources to stretch and challenge the most able students. Students take part in subject-specific seminars to challenge their thinking. Teachers give helpful feedback and question skilfully, in order to secure good progress for the most able. On the day of the inspection, this was particularly evident in further mathematics, physics, history and geography.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strong teaching is consistent across the whole mathematics department so that all groups of pupils make strong progress
- effective leadership in science is firmly embedded so that pupils make sustained and substantial progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Heidi Swidenbank
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection started with a self-evaluation of the school's performance. Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including current information about pupils' progress, safeguarding case studies and employment checks on staff. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at work and had discussions with staff and pupils. Inspectors could not review the surveys as no pupils or members of staff responded to these. Meetings were

held with the assistant headteachers, the head of mathematics and science and the designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector also spoke to members of the local governing body and the trust.