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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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31 October 2018

Mr Bruce Roberts
Headteacher
Belmont Park School
Leyton Green Road
Leyton
Waltham Forest
London
E10 6DB

Dear Mr Roberts

Short inspection of Belmont Park School

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 2018 with Joy Barter, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have shown impressive clarity and depth of commitment to ensuring that the absolute best outcomes for the pupils you work with are achieved. This is valued by pupils, staff and families. Academic and personal development progress across the school is carefully and regularly tracked and, as a result, leaders are able to accurately identify underachievement and put in support in a timely manner. Consequently, a high proportion of pupils achieve or exceed their annual targets.

Your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is honest and accurate. This has supported you to put into place a number of school improvement strategies that have further strengthened the provision for pupils. Since the last inspection, you have implemented a staffing restructure that has helped to clarify roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in a positive shift in the culture and has led to expectations for pupils being raised. As a result, pupils are calmer and more independent around the school. Previous areas for development have been addressed effectively and strategically. You now have a more personalised curriculum that considers individual pupil's interests, aspirations and skills. Although work is underway to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching, outcomes in English and mathematics at key stage 4 are weaker than in other areas.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and they report a sense of pride and belonging. They feel that they have the support of school leaders and that the

school is well managed. Relationships between staff members are strong, and they provide effective support for one another, particularly around dealing with challenging behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors provide effective support and challenge for school leaders around safeguarding, including regular focused visits to explore current issues and to reflect on practice. Staff training is comprehensive, and responds well to local risks and individual pupil's needs. Consequently, staff are skilled in keeping pupils safe, even when behaviour is challenging.

Staff develop very positive and trusting relationships with pupils based on mutual respect and understanding. You work closely with parents, carers and other professionals, including the local police and social care. This is to ensure that your most vulnerable pupils and their families receive a coordinated package of support to help them keep safe. The daily debrief meeting provides all staff with the opportunity to reflect on practice. It ensures that everyone is fully informed and prepared for the following day.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. This inspection focused on the impact of leaders' actions, particularly on how well the curriculum prepares pupils for life outside of school. I also looked at how leaders use assessment information to ensure that pupils make strong progress. Next, I considered how effectively leaders address behavioural and emotional issues to ensure that the pupils make the most of their time with you. Lastly, I focused on pupils' attendance.
- The curriculum is wisely tailored to address some of the challenges your pupils face beyond school, such as knife crime. It covers a range of important life skills and provides pupils with access to relevant qualifications and vocational pathways. For example, pupils are able to achieve construction certificates that can lead to paid employments on a building site. Where pupils are identified as being at risk, specialists are brought in to enhance the curriculum, including a drama group that focuses on gang affiliation.
- Despite previous negative experiences of education, the vast majority of pupils meet or exceed their learning targets. This is partly because when they join Belmont Park pupils quickly learn the value of education and are taught to resist negative influences. Pupils who were previously thought to have little chance of receiving qualifications often leave with a range of GCSE certificates. Because staff have high expectations, pupils make rapid progress from low starting points. This is particularly true with writing, where pupils are challenged to extend their writing skills across all subjects, including construction lessons. Pupils are clear about how the school is helping them, but some still lack the resilience and confidence to cope with examinations. Because pupils with speech and language

difficulties would benefit from more professional support in this area, progress is not always maximised.

- Leaders are able to identify gaps in learning because systems to track progress are robust and understood by all staff. From looking at pupils' work and spending time in lessons, there is evidence of some high-quality teaching within the school. Activities and resources are well matched to the desired learning outcomes and teachers have high expectations, resulting in greater levels of engagement. However, this is inconsistent and, as a result, progress in key stage 4 English and mathematics is weaker than other areas.
- Your work on pupil behaviour is a major strength of the school. Potential incidents are often avoided because staff skilfully calm pupils and guide them back to their learning. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and are able to pick up on even the smallest clues to help avoid problems even before they happen. Pupils know that the staff care about them and provide them with the time, space and skills to deal with issues. One pupil told me that 'they understand our problems'. Another said, 'My mind is at rest here and I can breathe.' Pupils are taught to resolve conflicts, tolerate the views of others, and to have a more positive attitude. As a result, the frequency of incidents has dramatically reduced over the last two years. Parents are pleased with the school's approach to behaviour, and one parent told me that 'they deal with behaviour really well'.
- Despite challenging circumstances, attendance for most pupils is significantly improved from their previous school. This is because you have strengthened systems around tracking absence and apply them consistently. This includes home visits for unexplained absence and work with the youth offending team and educational psychologists. Subsequently, most pupils have very high attendance, including those who hardly attended their previous school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the variation in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is reduced so that pupils make the best possible progress in these subjects
- you continue to build the resilience of pupils so that they are able to get the most out of their key stage 4 examinations
- the therapeutic input that the school offers is extended in order to develop pupils' speech, language and communication skills.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, and the director of children's services for London Borough of Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Francis Gonzalez
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, the inspection team held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. You accompanied the team inspector on a series of short visits to lessons. The inspection team held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, the curriculum, behaviour support and measuring pupils' progress. Meetings were held with the chair and one other governor. A meeting was also held with a group of pupils. The inspection team worked with senior leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and assessment information on pupils' progress. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the improvement plan, attendance data, records of pupils' progress and behaviour, and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. The inspection took into consideration five responses to the staff survey. There were too few responses to Parent View and the pupils' survey to generate a meaningful analysis.