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Miss Du Parcq
Acting Headteacher
Queen's Manor School and Special Needs Unit
Lysia Street
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Dear Miss Du Parcq

Short inspection of Queen's Manor School and Special Needs Unit

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2018, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leaders have successfully embraced leading the school during a time of change; following the departure of the long-standing, substantive headteacher.

Senior leaders' thorough and accurate evaluations of the school's work have set a clear course for improvement. Leaders' determination to continue to provide pupils with the best education possible is clear, for example, in improving pupils' attendance and academic outcomes. Governors bring a range of expertise to their roles. They provide good support and challenge for you and your leadership team.

At the last inspection the school was asked to share the best practice across the school to enable teaching assistants to develop their skills further and make a greater contribution to accelerating pupils' progress. Ongoing professional development has led to improvements in the use of assessment by all teaching staff. Teachers and teaching assistants use the school's teaching and learning policy well when facilitating learning. This policy is providing adults across the school with expectations and guidance on what strategies leaders consider best suit the needs of pupils at the school. Consequently, adults ensure that pupils know their targets, are clear of the purpose of each learning session, and have meaningful opportunities to review their learning. All this helps them to improve further, strengthening the good gains seen in their books. The pupils I spoke to said that they enjoy coming to school and that lessons are interesting. Pupils said how much they like their teachers and these positive relationships are further supporting their learning

Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have continued the development of an inclusive school which is highly valued by staff, parents and pupils. You and your staff are role models for the caring ethos which is evident throughout the school. As a result, there are excellent relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils. The exemplary behaviour, seen during the last inspection, both in lessons and around the school, has been maintained.

Teachers and support staff have created attractive and welcoming learning environments so that pupils are enthused to learn. Adults across the school take every opportunity to engage with their pupils, modelling rich, engaging, conversations. Staff know pupils well and celebrate pupils' very different skills and talents. Activities are well thought out to provide relevance and interest so that pupils can make sense of their learning. Consequently, pupils remain fully focused and motivated in their learning. This engagement is contributing to the school's good achievement for mainstream pupils and the strong progress made by pupils attending the school's specialist unit.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The required checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children. Staff training in child protection is regular and up to date, and includes useful electronic weekly updates on a range of issues. Staff articulate a clear and accurate understanding of the action to take in different safeguarding situations, including risks of physical and emotional abuse, radicalisation, children missing in education and female genital mutilation. The recently developed outdoor learning and play areas, along with the school buildings, are very well maintained and secure. Caring and respectful relationships are evident between staff and pupils. Pupils spoken to say that they feel safe and are listened to by staff. Staff's care and attention was clearly evident across the school and within the special needs unit.

Inspection findings

- In this short inspection, we focused on particular aspects of school life. First, we looked at to what extent the expertise across the two-year-old multi-academy trust is used to secure improvements and strengthen leadership and management.
- You and your senior leaders have stepped up, filling the vacant leadership roles admirably, following the relocation of the previous headteacher who successfully led the school for the last 14 years. Expertise across the trust has provided, and continues to provide, much-needed stability and support while governors advertise for a substantive headteacher. You benefit from the weekly Thursday morning leadership meetings at Queen's Manor. At these regular meetings, you are mentored by the other two very experienced headteachers from within the trust, one of whom is also the chief executive officer. This support is providing additional leadership capacity, strengthening the school's leadership structure to ensure that improvement is sustained. Both experienced headteachers have an excellent knowledge of your school, either from previous leadership experience at

Queen's Manor or as the chief executive officer.

- The trust is providing many opportunities for collaborative support and challenge while facilitating future leadership development and succession planning, particularly for middle and senior leaders. For example, the deputy headteachers across the trust regularly meet and undertake learning walks, book scrutinies and assessment checks, moderating standards across and beyond the trust. This year, year group leaders have been appointed to lead on learning across the trust's three schools, providing further opportunities for coaching, building leadership capacity, and encouraging staff retention. Expertise in music is shared between the schools, as is engagement in joint attendance projects with the local authority as a key partner. In addition to these strengths, trustees, and long-standing governor trustees who were instrumental in the formation of the trust two years ago, bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The school also benefits from strong partnerships with the local authority and the London Diocesan Board of schools.
- Second, we looked at how well pupils who access support from the additional needs provision are achieving, their overall attendance at school, and how this provision contributes to the wider school community. Leaders and governors recognise that, since the last inspection, pupils are entering the special needs unit with different and more complex needs. This has posed specific challenges for leaders to address. For example, you have secured local authority funding and adapted and changed the school environment to respond to pupils' sensory social and physical needs. The special needs unit is now at ground level, with purpose-built facilities for catering, play and learning. Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is more suited to the changing needs of the pupils and staff training reviewed. Unit staff are skilled, they know when to provide support and when to step back. Their well-considered questions effectively encourage pupils' independence and self-reliance, providing suitable challenge. Adults consider pupils' educational, health and care plans and pupils' wider needs. They keep clear records of the strong progress pupils make from their varying starting points. Home-school communication through the home-school link books is regular and informative.
- Last year, all staff, including those working outside of the unit, were trained in the use of basic Makaton (hand symbols). This is facilitating communication across the unit and is providing support for those integrated during the shared playground sessions. This is contributing to the strong sense of belonging within the school, and a culture of inclusion for all. As one parent commented, it is 'quite unique in its fusion of mainstream and SEND' (pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities), 'the kindness taught here sets the tone for principled, compassionate young people'...they are 'well known by all their teachers'.
- Leaders have a shared awareness of the importance of improving attendance. They now have a detailed oversight of the patterns and rates of attendance across all year groups and within the special needs unit. They use this, along with their knowledge of pupils' needs, to identify where to offer support and when to challenge. Consequently, whole-school attendance, including the attendance of those within the unit, has risen. Parents rightly report that their

children enjoy being at school. This is reflected in pupils' good attendance, which, for the school, including pupils in the unit, is above national averages.

- Third, we looked at the school's actions to improve the provision for pupils identified as at risk of not reaching age-related expectations, particularly pupil-premium pupils across key stage 2. Leaders have analysed patterns of progress and outcomes across the school. This has provided them with a clearer oversight of need, enabling them to take appropriate action, for example delivering a range of additional support, like 'language for thinking', to promote pupils' communication skills so they are more able to share and explain their ideas.
- There are good plans in place to support disadvantaged pupils. These plans consider pupils' academic needs as well as their pastoral support. Where these plans are suitably challenging and implemented consistently, they are having an impact, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as, or better progress than, other pupils both at the school and nationally. Staff across the school have benefited from a range of professional development which is supporting the good progress made by disadvantaged pupils.
- However, given that a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils enter at below age-related expectations, gaps remain across key stage 2 between the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. There is still work to be done. Leaders recognise that targeted interventions at key stage 2 need careful monitoring to ensure that they accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress further. Ongoing professional development and pupil-progress meetings are now supporting a greater awareness among all teaching staff of the age-related expectations for all pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned teaching strategies targeted at underperforming groups are tightly focused on accelerating progress further so that differences diminish between the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils across key stage 2 and other pupils nationally.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Brightwells Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hammersmith & Fulham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the chief executive officer of the Brightwells Academy Trust, another headteacher from within the trust and your senior leaders. I spoke with the chair and vice-chair of the board, who are also trustees, and had a telephone conversation with the chair of trustees. I also held discussions with staff who oversee pupil support sessions, inclusion, the arrangements for safer recruitment and those responsible for safeguarding. I spoke informally to staff and spoke to pupils in classes. You and I observed learning and behaviour in a sample of lessons, including the special needs unit. We also reviewed, with other members of staff, samples of pupils' work alongside the school's own assessment information on how well current pupils are progressing at the school. The 29 replies to the staff survey were considered. Also, the 179 replies to the school's own recent pupil survey were reviewed. The 113 responses to Parent View, the online parent survey, and the 87 responses to the school's own recent parent questionnaire were taken into account, along with the 64 comments received electronically. Leaders' own evaluations of the school's performance, records of your checks to keep children safe, and documents relating to the work of the academy trust and governance were also considered.