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Mr Ben Walsh
Headteacher
St Philip's School
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Dear Mr Walsh

Short inspection of St Philip's School

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 2018 with Kanwaljit Singh, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2013.

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 leadership team have a very accurate and honest view of the school's strengths and areas for development and you have already made significant progress on your plans for improvement. As a result of your clear and decisive actions, the provision for pupils is now even stronger. You are challenged and supported well by the multi-academy trust and you value this relationship. The trust also has a clear view on the improvements you and your team have secured.

There are well-established and effective systems which support the well-being and emotional development of pupils. Support staff act as key contacts if a child needs additional support and guidance. Parents, carers and pupils appreciate and value these staff members who listen and help. The school works very well with outside agencies and also commissions additional support if necessary.

The behaviour and attitudes of pupils is exemplary. Pupils are very proud of their school. They are polite, respectful and friendly to each other and to school staff. One pupil in the post-16 department, who was preparing for an activity in the community, reminded his classmates to stand up on the bus if you see someone else who needs to sit down. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about British values and to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Activities

include 'open mike' sessions, lunchtime clubs, residential opportunities and a wide range of sporting activities. Pupils and staff are proud of the fact that their girls' football team is unbeaten this season.

Throughout the school, and particularly in the post-16 department, there is a strong emphasis on preparing young people for adulthood. Study programmes in this area reflect the growing maturity of the students and include well-coordinated work experience. All students in the school leave with appropriate accreditation matched to their individual abilities.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the difference your school has made to their child's education. One parent said, 'At the heart of everything is the child. I would recommend this school to any parent.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates through the school. Leaders and class teams know their pupils very well, including the reasons why their special educational needs and/or disabilities might make them even more vulnerable. Teachers and support staff are vigilant and report concerns. Senior leaders act on these concerns and ensure that there is detailed record-keeping, including accurate chronologies. Parents say that their children feel safe at the school and that any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. Pupils feel safe and they know who they can talk to if they have a concern.

All staff, including those who have recently joined the school, understand their role in protecting children. Leaders have ensured that recruitment, induction and regular training is focused on keeping pupils safe. The trust ensures effective oversight of all of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the community through personal, social and health education lessons. Older pupils in the post-16 department have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe through an effective life-skills curriculum.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. First, we agreed to focus on how effectively support staff contribute to ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress. This is because the last inspection identified this as an area for improvement. The support of additional adults in the classroom is now a strength. You have provided all staff with high-quality training and support. Consequently, you have a motivated and skilled workforce who have very positive relationships with pupils and who know how to support them. Pupils are treated with dignity and respect and there are very high expectations of what they can achieve. You have effective systems in place to support the well-being and personal development of pupils, including information sharing meetings before the start of the day.
- All staff allow pupils opportunities to develop their independence and they are expert in giving all pupils time to think and respond. Attitudes to learning and pupil behaviour are

strengths of the school. This is because there is a high degree of consistency in the behaviour and attitudes modelled by all staff and their calm and considered responses to pupils. Pupils like the adults who work with them and they return the respect that they are given.

- Next, we agreed to look at how effectively leaders check that teaching prepares pupils for the next stage of education and adult life. The school, supported by the trust, has very effective systems in place for making sure that teaching is continually improving. Teachers understand these systems and respond very well to the feedback given by leaders and middle leaders about how to improve their practice. Teachers are reflective, and support each other by sharing the best methods across the school. Professional development and training is planned thoughtfully, and staff continually update their skills.
- Most pupils are working towards academic qualifications, and the subject knowledge to deliver these subjects up to entry level and GCSE standard is very strong. Senior leaders are effective in checking that all pupils are making progress in both academic subjects and some non-academic areas, such as in improvements to their well-being and resilience. The school's assessment systems would be even better if they demonstrated where pupils' progress is substantial and sustained.
- Finally, we agreed to see how effectively the school has responded to the changing school population. The school has an increasing number of primary-aged pupils. You are also educating pupils with a wider range of needs, including those who need support for their social and emotional development. The curriculum for pupils in key stage 2 matches the good quality of the curriculum at other key stages. It is appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupils and has scope to capture the individual interests of the pupils. Pupils in this key stage enjoy their learning and make strong progress from their starting points. Some pupils have been missing significant amounts of time from school before they start at your school, and the attendance of these pupils is markedly improved. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how well the school supports their child's education.
- For the growing number of pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, you have ensured that staff are well trained and consistently apply positive behaviour strategies. Staff understand the many reasons why pupils display challenging behaviour and they are skilled in calming pupils and guiding them back to learning. Staff feel that leaders support them in the management of behaviour and they appreciate the way leaders consider staff well-being as well as that of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's assessment systems demonstrate where pupils' progress is substantial and sustained.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston upon Thames. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gary Pocock
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your two deputy headteachers and your designated safeguarding lead. We had discussions and meetings with parents, the deputy CEO of the trust, the vice chair of the local governing body and a focus group of staff. Inspectors visited all classrooms, accompanied either by you or one of your senior leaders. We talked to a wide range of pupils and staff and, together with leaders, looked at pupils' work and other evidence to evaluate pupils' progress over time. We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, safeguarding records, pupil progress information, and behaviour and attendance information. We considered the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. We took into account the 21 responses to Parent View.