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15 January 2019

Ms Charlotte Robinson  
Headteacher  
Rokeby School  
Barking Road  
London  
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Dear Ms Robinson

### **Short inspection of Rokeby School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 2018 with Alison Moore, 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 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 team have created a school community that is welcoming, caring and outreaching. Pupils value their education, themselves and others because you and your team have high aspirations for them. This is underpinned by the school's values of 'respect, success, passion for learning, personal challenge and harmony'.

Governors are committed and care passionately about the school. They bring a wealth of experience and provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders.

You and your team have carefully analysed the reasons for the dip in outcomes in GCSE examinations in 2018. You have responded quickly and effectively, and pupils are now making stronger progress over time.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, and they are rarely absent and rarely late. Pupils are respectful and courteous and seek to support each other. One pupil said that the 'school feels much more like a family than a school'. This is evident from the way those in the school community look out for each other. For example, pupils recently set up a food bank which is of great help to many in the school, and the wider community.

Pupils appreciate the broad curriculum and extensive range of activities they have available to them. Those who spoke to inspectors said that they particularly enjoyed

'passport days', when they are given the opportunity visit venues such as the science museum and the Houses of Parliament. Pupils said that they enjoyed learning about how the world works and how the country is led.

You and your team are ambitious for all pupils. You seek to raise aspirations through initiatives such as the 'brilliant club', which provides the most able pupils with the opportunity to visit Russell Group universities.

You and your team have responded to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. You have strengthened leadership, with a focus on improving the quality of teaching in the school. The previous inspection report also highlighted the need to provide greater challenge for the most able pupils. You recognise that, although you and your team made some progress in this area, there is still more work to be done.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team have created a school environment where pupils are safe and feel safe. You maintain comprehensive and up-to-date safeguarding records, and you ensure that those employed in the school are suitable to work with children.

Staff receive regular high-quality training. Those who spoke to inspectors were very clear about what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Staff know the warning signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk from harm and they are quick to refer concerns to the appropriate members of staff.

Leaders log all concerns accurately and maintain detailed records of the action taken to keep children safe. Leaders work well with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that pupils who need help are provided for in a timely manner.

You and your team anticipate the safeguarding risks that pupils might face. For example, very recently, pupils were reminded about firework safety and the dangers of cycling on busy roads in the dark. Staff are aware of the current risks to pupils' mental health and emotional well-being, including from social media. You have been proactive in addressing this issue by working closely with a charity providing expertise in this area.

### **Inspection findings**

- For the first key line of enquiry, we agreed to look at what leaders are doing in response to the recent dip in outcomes in English. This is because pupils' progress in English at the end of key stage 4 in 2018 was below average. Pupils' progress in English at the end of key stage 4 in 2017 was above average.
- Leaders have introduced a comprehensive plan to raise outcomes. Central to this is the strong emphasis on reading in the school. All pupils, staff and governors were recently bought a book as part of the school's 'big read'. The book's author visited the school on World Book Day to talk about his work and this year he is running creative writing workshops for pupils in Years 8 and 9.

- Leaders have sought to raise the quality of teaching by better use of assessment information for planning, and by providing teachers with more time to work together and share good practice. The school's information shows that the quality of teaching is consistently strong across the department.
- Inspectors noted that teachers use their good subject knowledge, comprehensive understanding of pupils' needs, and accurate assessment information to plan effectively.
- As a result, pupils behave well in lessons, they are keen to learn, and are now making stronger progress over time. Inspection evidence is supported by the school's own assessment information, which indicates an improving picture.
- For the next key line of enquiry, we looked at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This is because, in 2018, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than their peers by the end of key stage 4.
- Strategies are in place to help disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress, with the first priority being improved attendance. As a result of leaders' tenacity in following up all absences without delay, disadvantaged pupils' attendance has improved significantly and is now higher than the national average for all pupils. Leaders have also introduced a wide range of opportunities for pupils to help raise their aspirations. The pupils who spoke to inspectors were particularly enthusiastic about the instrumental music tuition they receive.
- Leaders also recognise the importance of working with parents and carers and have introduced a series of events to engage with them. These events take place regularly and presentations are made in a range of languages. For example, during the inspection, a presentation was made to a group of parents in Bengali.
- However, teaching is not yet consistent in its focus on the progress and attainment of this group of pupils. Work in pupils' books indicates that although disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress, they are not yet achieving as well as their peers.
- For the third key line of enquiry, we agreed to look at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes for the most able pupils. This is because at the end of key stage 4 in 2018, they made less progress than their peers in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders have been quick to analyse last year's GCSE results and identify the reasons behind the dip in achievement. Leaders are keen to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate challenge in lessons and have prioritised the teaching of most-able pupils in their training programme.
- Inspectors noted that the most able pupils were being appropriately challenged in mathematics and science. This was most noticeable in the higher sets, where pupils were acquiring specialist subject knowledge and demonstrating strong skill development.
- For the final key line of enquiry, we looked at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes in modern foreign languages. This is because pupils made less progress in modern foreign languages than in other subjects by the end of key stage 4 in 2018. Pupils make stronger progress in Spanish than in French.

- Leaders have responded quickly to the significant dip in progress last year by working closely with examination boards and introducing a range of intervention activities. For example, the most able pupils in Year 10 have been given the opportunity to join a Year 11 intervention group to develop their knowledge and skills. Changes have also been made to staffing, including the appointment of a new subject leader.
- Modern languages are popular. Inspectors noted good behaviour in lessons and a strong desire to learn. This is because teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons. Inspectors observed that although pupils were given many opportunities to interpret the target language into English, opportunities to speak and write in the target language were more limited. This slows pupils' skill development and therefore their progress in writing and speaking in the target language.
- Inspectors noted an improving picture in modern foreign languages and this is supported by the school's own assessment information.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the additional pupil premium funding is used effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress
- teaching routinely challenges the most able pupils so that they make stronger progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Niall Gallagher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we met with you, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. We made visits to classrooms, jointly with senior leaders. We spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at a range of pupils' work in their books and folders. We met with pupils from key stages 3 and 4 to talk about their views of the school and reviewed the 30 responses to the parent questionnaire. We evaluated a range of school documentation, including leaders' development plans and safeguarding information.