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Mr Paul Cronin
Headteacher
Redbridge High School
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Dear Mr Cronin

Short inspection of Redbridge High School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2019 with Kathleen McArthur, 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 outstanding in February 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have a clear vision for your school. The development of pupils' communication skills and independence is a priority. This, combined with high-quality teaching, prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education. Staff and governors share your vision.

Pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything that you do. You and your staff care deeply about the pupils you work with. Staff have a detailed understanding of each pupil's needs. They work closely with parents and carers, going the extra mile to support pupils. The warm relationships between pupils and staff reflect this caring ethos.

The move to a new building has been handled well. You have created a calm, safe, welcoming environment for pupils. Staff are proud to work at the school. They gain much from the opportunities for professional development that you offer. Staff also value the importance leaders place on staff well-being. They work tirelessly to meet the individual needs of pupils.

High-quality teaching enables pupils to make excellent progress. Clear communication ensures that pupils understand what they need to do. Well-established routines allow lessons to flow smoothly. Skilful use of resources gives all pupils the opportunity to take part in lessons. Support staff are very effectively

deployed. This ensures that every pupil receives the help they need to develop their skills.

The local authority values the work of your school. During the inspection, a representative of the local authority stated: 'We hold Redbridge High School in very high regard.' Their commitment to increasing the number of pupils at your school reflects this.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors asked you to improve the accountability of middle leaders. You have successfully addressed this by increasing training opportunities for staff. There are now four leaders with nationally recognised qualifications. Several more members of staff are working towards gaining these qualifications. This has increased awareness of the need for accountability to school leaders. The creation of two new roles has widened the opportunities for staff to take on middle leader roles. These roles strengthened the links between classroom staff and senior leaders. As a result of these actions middle leaders are now held more closely to account. There are clear lines of responsibility and senior leaders have a clear understanding of the impact of the work of middle leaders.

However, two senior leaders are due to leave the school and pupil numbers are going to increase. In order to maintain the current high quality of education it is vital that these strengths in leadership are sustained.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. The care and attention given to all pupils reflect this. Staff place high priority on pupils' safety and well-being.

Leaders ensure that all staff are thoroughly trained to support the pupils in their care. Appropriate and timely training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They are vigilant about potential risks.

Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. The safeguarding governor has attended appropriate training. She visits the school and meets regularly with the designated safeguarding officer to maintain oversight and scrutiny of relevant processes.

All staff have a strong working knowledge of safeguarding issues and understand the risks to pupils. They engage closely with parents and appropriate authorities to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

The systems to safeguard pupils are robust and rigorously monitored by leaders. Safeguarding concerns raised by staff result in swift actions by leaders.

Pupils say that they feel safe and know that they can share any concerns with an adult.

Inspection findings

- I wanted to know about pupils' rates of attendance. This is because, in the past, the proportion of pupils who were regularly absent from school was above the national average. The school's overall average attendance remains low. This is because of those pupils who have higher levels of absence in relation to their medical needs. You understand the reasons why these pupils are absent from school. Your staff do all that they can to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Staff work very closely with families to give extra support to those who need it. You have very effective systems in place to ensure that those pupils who are absent from school are safe.
- Information on the school website showed that attendance at governors' meetings had been low. Given this information, I wanted to know whether governors are effective in holding leaders to account. Attendance at governors' meetings has now improved. In discussions with governors it was clear that they know the school very well. For example, governors clearly explained how leaders use additional funding to support pupils.
- Governors share the senior leadership team's vision for the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. This enables them to challenge school leaders appropriately.
- Leaders have a strong focus on preparing pupils for the next stage in their education. I wanted to find out how well the curriculum supports this. The design of the curriculum is highly individualised and flexible. It provides pupils with the opportunity to develop the communication skills they need for everyday life. There is also a strong emphasis on developing independence.
- Pupils obtain academic qualifications which enable them to access a wide range of courses at local colleges. Close links with these colleges ensure that pupils gain experience of new settings before leaving school. This helps to make sure that the transition to new providers is successful.
- Off-site visits allow pupils to experience a wide range of different environments and communication with members of the public. This helps prepare them for leaving school. School information shows that in recent years all leavers have been successfully placed in new settings.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new leaders have the experience and expertise to lead the school and sustain the outstanding quality of education as the number of pupils increases.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Burgess
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and other leaders. An inspector also met with two members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and your school improvement partner.

Inspectors met with a group of pupils and spoke with pupils during lessons and at social times. An inspector also met with a group of staff.

Leaders accompanied inspectors on visits to classrooms, where they observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects. They also looked at pupils' work across the school.

Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They also scrutinised a range of policies and leaders' school improvement plan and self-evaluation. Inspectors also checked the school's website.

Inspectors considered the responses of six parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, along with free-text comments. They also took account of 41 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.