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Mr Ranjit Berdesha
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Dear Mr Berdesha

Short inspection of Heston Community School

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 2019 with Yvonne Chisholm, Ofsted Inspector and 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 second short inspection carried out since the predecessor school was judged to be good in January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Over the last three years, you have developed the quality of teaching and improved pupils' learning and progress, both in the main school and the sixth form. You have achieved this by working effectively alongside your trustees, governors, leadership team, staff, parents and carers.

The impact of effective leadership is seen in the overall progress measure for Year 11 pupils, which is very strong and has been significantly above the national average since 2016. Likewise, pupils with different prior attainment, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress between Years 7 and 11 across nearly all subjects. Additionally, the progress made by post-16 students who sat academic A-level examinations increased from significantly below the national average in 2017 to significantly above average in 2018.

You gave inspectors your view of the three key strategies that have supported this improvement: the appointment of specialist teachers; the development of learning across the school, based on tried and tested educational research, so that all pupils

are engaged appropriately and challenged; and the encouragement of pupils to aim high, not to be afraid to fail and to have high career aspirations. Pupils' and post-16 students' historic performance by the end of Years 11 and 13 show that this combination has been successful.

The governing body is effective in its role, both encouraging you and your senior leadership team and holding you closely to account. You welcome governors' input as a supportive and 'critical friend'. At the last inspection, an area for improvement was for leaders and governors to sharpen the analysis of pupils' progress so that underachievement is identified and addressed. This has improved.

You and your leadership team are committed to driving whole school change by consulting with and empowering your staff. Teachers told inspectors that since being appointed you have 'raised the bar and taken staff with you'. Almost all staff who completed the online survey say that the school is well led and managed and you consider their workload and well-being.

You and your leaders are open to new ideas which will benefit your pupils' learning and well-being. You also share good practice with other local schools and those in neighbouring local authorities.

Pupils appreciate the high aspirations which you and your staff model and expect. They really enjoy being at school. They say that the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and around the school supports them to learn well and feel safe. Parents and carers who responded to the online survey were positive about all aspects of the school's work. This, and the points above, are strong evidence that you, the trustees and governors, leaders and staff are improving the school's effectiveness.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team, trustees and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and are fit for purpose. Together, you have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and staff are aware of the latest safeguarding procedures because they receive regular training. Parents and staff agree that children are safe at your school. Likewise, pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

Leaders carry out robust checks that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are vigilant and have a secure understanding of the potential risks that pupils might encounter from outside school, including, for example, knife crime. They know the warning signs that show that a pupil may be at risk of harm and what to do if they have a concern. Effective systems are in place to check that pupils who attend alternative provision are safe. Senior leaders have effective partnerships with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive early help if this is required. Comprehensive written child protection records provide evidence of quick follow-up action when issues are identified.

Inspection findings

- For our first line of enquiry, inspectors considered the design of the key stage 3 curriculum, the quality of teaching in key stage 3 and its impact on pupils' learning, including that of different groups of pupils. This was to find out whether provision and outcomes in key stage 3 are as strong as those in key stage 4.
- At the time of the inspection, leaders and teachers were revising the content of the key stage 3 curriculum. The purpose of this was to provide a stronger foundation to develop pupils' knowledge and skills to support their learning during key stage 4. Subject leaders say that teachers are discussing and piloting how to include greater depth in subject content, going beyond the national curriculum. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that these changes are leading to pupils acquiring skills and knowledge which deepens their understanding over time.
- At the same time, you are enhancing the curriculum in other respects. This was seen in the school's new approach to teaching literacy. Years 7 to 9 pupils now read during tutor time to improve their literacy and leaders focus on teachers' development of pupils' literacy when pupils' work is scrutinised. Additionally, you and the governors intend to reintroduce music into the curriculum offer.
- Evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows that they make strong progress over time in most subjects, including English, mathematics, physical education and geography. Disadvantaged pupils are making the same good progress as others in these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress as a result of the good-quality teaching and support that they receive. These pupils work well with their peers during lessons. The most-able pupils make good progress in most subjects, but their progress is not as strong in science and some other subjects.
- The school's own analysis aligns with that of inspectors and shows that pupils are gaining the strong foundations they need for work in key stage 4. You have already identified that the next step is to ensure that most-able pupils are fully challenged in all their lessons for all subjects. A leadership role has been created to address this.
- Second, we agreed to investigate pupils' attendance. This is because the overall attendance and persistent absence figures for several pupil groups did not match or exceed the national average for all pupils (94.5%) in July 2018.
- The school has adopted a range of strategies to promote pupils' attendance including governors' forensic monitoring of pupils' attendance figures. Your school improvement plan and internal analysis acknowledges that the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as their first language remained higher than the latest national figure for all pupils at 15.7% and 17.5 %, respectively. You are using a range of interventions to address this, including initiating legal action.
- As a result of the school's work, the overall attendance figures of all pupil groups are now high compared to national figures. Furthermore, the persistent absence for almost all groups remains low compared to the latest national figures (13.9%).

- Finally, we considered the impact of your work to reduce the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions, especially for different pupil groups. Although the overall percentage of external exclusions has been low compared to the national figure, this was not the case for some pupil groups. These were boys, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND who did not have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school gives high priority to pupils' emotional well-being as a first step to improving attitudes and behaviour. Pupils are taught about positive mental health in the school's weekly personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons and how to keep themselves safe. You are planning to create 'peaceful learning areas' in the school by creating green spaces and recently changed the timings of the school day.
- Leaders and governors have systematically reviewed and evaluated the sanctions used to improve pupils' behaviour. This led to sanctions being specifically targeted to pupils' individual behavioural need, to give them greater impact. While there was an increase in the total number of internal exclusions in 2018, you have reduced external permanent and fixed-term exclusions for all pupil groups so these are low compared to the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers rigorously challenge the most able pupils in Years 7 to 9 in all their lessons, so the progress they make during key stage 3 is as strong as their peers with different starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, governors (who are also trustees), senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and pupils. They reviewed documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, attendance and exclusions (external and internal). A range of school improvement documents and your reports to the governing body were considered. Inspectors visited a range of classes in a variety of subjects, together with senior leaders. This was to observe Years 7 to 9 pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I held a discussion by phone with the headteacher of the alternative provision and with a representative from the local authority. We scrutinised responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.