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Sarah Creasey
Headteacher
Parliament Hill School
Highgate Road
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Dear Ms Creasey

No formal designation inspection of Parliament Hill School

Following my visit to your school on 20 October 2021, with Mark Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for no formal designation (NFD) inspections. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills was concerned about behaviour at the school.

We do not give graded judgements on NFD inspections. However, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but where no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection will normally be a section 5 inspection and will be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the NFD inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

Evidence

We considered evidence that included:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussing whole-school systems for managing behaviour and attendance
- discussions with those responsible for governance, leaders and staff.

Having evaluated the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

Parliament Hill is a large community school, with 1246 pupils from ages 11 to 19. The school is part of the LaSWAP sixth-form consortium in Camden. Around half of the pupils who attend the school are from minority ethnic groups. A third of pupils speak English as an additional language and a third are entitled to free school meals. An eighth of pupils receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a smaller proportion having an education, health and care plan. Pupil mobility is low. The school is fully staffed. Parliament Hill was judged to be good by Ofsted in 2013 and again in 2018.

Behaviour and attitudes

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning. Routines for behaviour management are clear and well understood. Teachers apply them consistently. Pupils value the emphasis on reform instead of punishment. If a leader removes a pupil from class, a restorative conversation with the teacher takes place at the end of the day. This helps the pupil rebuild her relationship with the member of staff. She can start afresh next lesson. Most pupils appreciate the 'Parli' points they gain for positive behaviour and achievement. Subject teachers also send praise postcards and text messages home.

Recently, leaders have adapted the way they manage behaviour. The language they use in relation to sanctions is different. Now pupils get a 'reminder', not a 'warning'. After two reminders in a lesson, pupils get a behaviour point rather than a detention. Staff have received training to help them implement these changes. The headteacher and other leaders model the behaviour that is expected of all staff and pupils. They continue to seek the views of teachers and pupils about this new behaviour strategy.

Pupils' arrival at school is orderly. They behave well around the building. As a result, lesson changeover is quick, and pupils get to lessons promptly. Younger and older pupils have different break and lunchtimes. Some classes are in lessons while others take a break. This does not affect their concentration. During breaks, pupils show high levels of self-control. They enjoy socialising with their friends. Pupils move promptly when the bell rings to mark the start of lessons.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They are confident in asking and responding to questions. Attitudes to learning are stronger in Years 10 and 11 than in the younger years. Older pupils are proud to be part of this inclusive school. They said that the COVID-19 pandemic has made them appreciate their education even more. Pupils are polite to each other and to their teachers. They enjoy good relationships. Staff offer gentle reminders to pupils, for example about the wearing of lanyards. Pupils respond

positively. Teachers know them well and prioritise their mental health. Pupils can access counselling support and a range of therapies. They know that their motto is, 'High achieving and happy.' Teachers help them to live up to this.

The school teaches pupils to be respectful of others in their diverse community. Currently, they are celebrating Black History Month. Teachers have listened to pupils' feedback. As a result, this year a greater emphasis has been placed on the accomplishments of Black people. Pupils can write down their thoughts and feelings about Black Lives Matter on a display board. They are confident they would challenge any use of offensive language in the school. They would also report it to a teacher. However, pupils in Years 8 and 9 are not as confident about some important issues around diversity and personal development. They have a basic understanding about different faiths, races, sexualities and being inclusive. However, they feel left out because, as a result of the pandemic, they have not benefited from hearing visiting speakers and taking part in discussion about these issues.

Leaders keep detailed records of bullying incidents. There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying in the school. If it happens, pupils are confident about how to report it. Teachers take statements from those involved, investigate and use a restorative approach. Pupils know there will be serious repercussions if bullying continues. Sometimes there are friendship issues among younger pupils. Pupils in the lower years recognise they can be judgemental of each other and that this can be hurtful.

Staff track pupils' attendance and behaviour closely. Leaders draw on their trauma-informed training to work with pupils and families. They use external agencies as appropriate. Teachers meet every fortnight to discuss individual pupils. They consider changes to pupils' behaviour, attendance or punctuality. Teachers anticipate problems before they arise. They use appropriate interventions. These include therapy, mentoring, counselling or meetings with parents. Leaders use alternative provision for a small number of pupils. These pupils remain on the school roll.

Priorities for further improvement

- Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are less confident about inclusion than other year groups. This is due to their inconsistent experiences during the pandemic. Leaders should provide additional opportunities for these pupils to understand and appreciate inclusion issues. This will foster their greater sense of belonging to the school community.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong
Her Majesty's Inspector