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Mr Freddie Adu
Headteacher
Queensmill School
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Dear Mr Adu

Short inspection of Queensmill School

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 2018 with Mary Geddes, 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vibrant leadership has enhanced the provision significantly since you became headteacher. This has included the addition of a girls' unit, post-19 provision and supported work experience. These developments have provided pupils with new opportunities, including pathways to employment.

An aspirational governing body has ensured that there is appropriate support in maintaining a culture of high expectations throughout the school. Governors and leaders work tirelessly to build a safe and supportive culture that enables pupils to flourish, despite significant social and emotional needs. As a result, standards have remained high and the school continues to improve.

Since the last inspection, you have introduced an assessment system that carefully tracks both academic progress and personal skills development. Teachers and support staff are exceptionally clear about additional needs, barriers to learning and pupils' special interests. Consequently, teaching is sharply focused and pupil outcomes are outstanding. Frequent dialogue between teachers and therapists ensures that pupils' needs continue to be met.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff know pupils

exceptionally well, and are alert to the signs of potential risks. Support is adapted accordingly, so that those pupils who have complex needs are safe and secure. Pupils are equipped to handle life in the outside world because they are given the language to keep themselves safe. For example, every pupil has a 'people and relationships' book that details what touch is appropriate for the people in their lives. Several parents of autistic children are governors and this provides the governing body with a deep understanding of the vulnerability of your pupils. As a result, they are well placed to support leaders to keep pupils safe at all times.

The pupils and their families that I spoke to reported that your school is a safe place to be, and that staff at your school genuinely care about everyone in the school community. Parents speak very highly of the school. They feel that the school's 'caring and loving environment' is 'an extension of the family'. One parent told us that getting her child into the school was like a mountain lifted from her shoulders.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. This inspection looked at how effective leaders have been at maintaining a focus on pupil outcomes during significant expansion. I also looked at how successful leaders have been in ensuring that the curriculum enables pupils to excel. Lastly, I focused on making sure that pupils are challenged to make the best possible individual progress.
- Effective and consistent leadership has enabled you to extend the school while retaining a focus on pupil outcomes. All leaders are clear about their roles and feel well supported by senior leaders and co-workers. Staff recognise one another's strengths and are keen to share their skills with others to further improve the provision for pupils. Middle leaders value the autonomy they are allowed, and feel part of an innovative team. You are working to continue to develop their strengths so that teachers are a more proactive team, and leadership skills across the school are increased.
- The new curriculum being introduced is becoming more personalised, and leaders are working to link this more closely to the national curriculum. The academic and autism-related foci allow pupils to learn at an appropriate level, and aim to support them to acquire strategies to self-manage their autism. Pupils' special interests are carefully considered when planning lessons, and consequently pupils demonstrate exceptionally high levels of engagement. Parents are key partners in curriculum development, contributing ideas for what should be taught and outcomes they feel are important.
- Pupils have access to a wealth of opportunities to transfer skills to real-life situations. These include running a café and working at a cake stall in the local market. Opportunities to apply learning to motivating and meaningful situations within school are routinely taken. For example, the catering staff expertly use communication systems to allow pupils to make their own choices at lunchtime. Because the curriculum includes travel training, pupils are able to increase their independence in ways previously not thought possible. One pupil, who previously

would not leave his home, now uses the Tube every weekend to safely explore London. Older pupils have access to carefully planned work experience which helps develop their social skills and allows them to contribute to society. For some pupils, this then provides access to paid employment through supported internships.

- Leaders make excellent use of the provision at each site, including the new girls' unit and post-19 provision. Pupils are observed and assessed in both academic and social skills to determine the best setting for them. Leaders and other staff are flexible in managing transition, and in providing appropriate levels of integration in mainstream schools. Pupils succeed within mainstream provision because they are explicitly taught skills to enable them to be more resilient and to regulate their own behaviour.
- Teachers use assessment information systems very well to plan individualised learning activities for every pupil. They work alongside therapists to observe and analyse progress towards meeting targets. This professional dialogue allows for approaches to be refined where necessary, and for pupils to make rapid and sustained progress. This is helped because leaders have chosen to employ therapists directly who are a valued part of the team. Targets are relevant because they are closely linked to education, health and care plans and written in partnership with families and other professionals. Some targets are not always as aspirational as they could be, and could relate more to the broader aspects of the curriculum. This is particularly true for the pupils based in mainstream schools. Detailed analysis of individual pupil progress does not yet provide useful information by relevant groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- targets are always challenging and that there is a stronger link between the personal targets that are being set and the national curriculum
- they are able to analyse data by meaningful groups so that pupil outcomes are always maximised.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Hammersmith and Fulham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Francis McDonald-Gonzalez
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, the inspection team held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. You accompanied the team inspector on a series of short visits to lessons. The inspection team held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, the curriculum, the sixth form and measuring pupil progress. Meetings were held with the chair and two other governors. A meeting was also held with a group of pupils. The inspection team worked with senior leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and assessment information on pupils' progress. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. The inspection took into consideration 62 responses to the staff survey and 19 responses to the parent survey. There were too few responses to the pupil survey to generate a meaningful analysis.