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Mrs Jenni Tyler-Maher
Executive Headteacher
Cleeve Park School
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Dear Mrs Tyler-Maher

Short inspection of Cleeve Park School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2018 with Shaun Dodds, HMI, 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 January 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection.

There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.

Staff and pupils are positive about the school. Staff feel supported, both in their professional development and with their management of pupils' behaviour. Newly qualified teachers were keen to tell us about how much they enjoyed participating in 'learning walks' as part of the school's quality assurance process.

The previous inspection report identified some inconsistencies in teaching, including, on occasion, the insufficient challenge presented to pupils. Since then, you and your leadership team have introduced new systems for checking on the quality of learning in lessons. You have promoted school-wide strategies to encourage more active and collaborative learning. Nevertheless, it remains the case that work is not consistently well matched to pupils' abilities. Consequently, there are too many occasions where pupils do not make the progress that they should from their starting points. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils, who make far less progress over time than other pupils nationally.

Interviews with governors showed that they do not have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and so they are unable to provide the necessary support and challenge. In particular, they did not have accurate assessment information and were overgenerous in their evaluation of the school, including the sixth form.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality. Pupils report that bullying is rare and that if it is reported, it is swiftly dealt with. There is an online tool for reporting concerns, which pupils say is effective. Members of staff were very clear about safeguarding arrangements and who they should go to with any concerns.

All staff receive regular training, including on the 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation and drug awareness. Leaders ensure that referrals to outside agencies are followed up systematically. There is a culture of safeguarding in the school.

In lessons, assemblies and targeted workshops, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Inspectors observed a workshop for Year 9 and 10 pupils which raised their awareness of risks of involvement in gangs. This was organised in response to recent local events. Pupils engaged thoughtfully in the question-and-answer session observed.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, four areas of focus were agreed. The first of these was how effective leaders and managers have been in sustaining and improving pupils' behaviour. This was chosen because fixed-term exclusions had increased over time and were above national averages.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy. Staff are happy with the new rewards and consequence system and feel well supported in managing behaviour. Broadly, pupils' behaviour around the school is positive. Pupils are courteous and friendly.
- However, where teaching is weaker, off-task behaviour disrupts learning. Staff do not apply the behaviour policy consistently, resulting in a mixed experience for pupils across lessons. Incidents of poor behaviour are inconsistently recorded. Consequently, leaders' analysis of behaviour is too general and support is not precisely targeted. Overall, the number of fixed-term exclusions, while falling, remains above average, and disadvantaged pupils are twice as likely to be excluded as other pupils.
- The second area of focus was the effectiveness of leaders in improving the progress of students taking A levels, which has been weak for the past three years.
- The school's own assessment information suggests that progress has improved and is now closer to that typically found nationally. Sixth-form students described the high quality of academic and pastoral support that they had received. They particularly valued advice on their next steps. Information about students' destinations showed that this has had a positive impact, with all students progressing to education, training or employment.
- The third area of focus was the progress of disadvantaged pupils across subjects, but especially in mathematics. This was chosen because the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been significantly below that of other pupils nationally

for the last two years. The difference in performance between these and other pupils nationally in mathematics was particularly wide.

- School leaders have used pupil premium funding wisely. Strategies include mentoring for disadvantaged pupils, tutor groups that allow targeted subject teaching and additional revision sessions. These strategies have helped disadvantaged pupils make some progress in their GCSE courses, although not at sufficient rates to compensate for previous underachievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in history and religious studies, with strong teaching that has responded well to leaders' initiatives, including collaborative work. In other subjects, their progress is weaker, particularly where work is not well matched to the pupils' abilities.
- The final area of focus was leaders' effectiveness in tackling weaknesses in science. This was because pupils' progress in science over the last three years has been significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- The school's own information and analysis showed a small improvement in pupils' outcomes. However, this was not supported by evidence from this inspection in lessons and pupils' work. Pupils' notebooks were scrappy, had work missing and subject-specific misconceptions that went unaddressed. Leaders agreed that the quality of work observed in lessons and books was not good enough.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is of a consistently high standard to challenge and support all pupils, especially in mathematics and science
- disadvantaged pupils make strong progress from their starting points
- staff apply the behaviour policy and use recording systems consistently so that support can be targeted more effectively and exclusions minimised.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Avnee Morjaria
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors observed lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to school leaders, staff and pupils. They also considered assessment and monitoring information and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and safeguarding. Inspectors looked at information about the sixth form, especially with regard to A levels, and spoke to staff and students. Inspectors were unable to observe teaching in A-level lessons because Year 12 students were on work experience.