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Mr George Collins
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Dear Mr Collins

Short inspection of Burnside Secondary PRU

Following my visit to the school on 7 July 2016 with 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 first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Further improvements have led to pupils achieving ever better results over the last three years. A determined team of senior and middle leaders is working together to raise standards throughout all areas of the school. They ensure that pupils get the support they need to reach their full potential and take their next steps. This can be seen in the high number of pupils who successfully return to mainstream schools, colleges and work placements to complete their education. Your leadership benefits from the support offered by the executive headteacher of the Hawkswood group and the skills and experience of the chair and other members of the management committee. You share a common understanding of how best to support secondary pupils who have struggled to succeed in mainstream schools. You have built very positive partnerships with other headteachers and local authority officers within Waltham Forest. This has ensured that the number of pupils who are permanently excluded within the borough has remained low. For example, you have developed a well-qualified and experienced team of learning mentors to work within secondary schools to identify pupils who need additional support and assist with the return of those returning to mainstream settings.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report with some success. Literacy and numeracy skills are consistently reinforced by all staff as a result of the training they have received. All adults are keenly

focused on supporting the learning, welfare and emotional needs of pupils. They develop very positive relationships with pupils and ask probing questions to identify any gaps in understanding that need to be closed. Consequently, many pupils start to engage more positively with their learning and begin to make rapid progress towards their targets. There is now a considerable amount of information gathered to demonstrate how well all pupils are doing. The progress of pupils is measured from accurate starting points when they arrive and monitored carefully. However, assessment information for different groups or key stages is not collected or used in a systematic manner by leaders. This makes it difficult for the management committee to hold leaders fully to account or monitor how successful all interventions have been.

The good standard of teaching and learning across the school has been maintained. You judge that there is an increasing proportion of teaching that is outstanding and this view is supported by the work seen in pupils' books and the impressive results some pupils achieve during their time at the school. Nearly all pupils in key stage 3 are making at least the expected amount of progress in all subjects. Many make accelerated progress, catch up with their peers and successfully return to mainstream schools after two terms. Key stage 4 pupils achieve equally as well. Many achieved GCSE results last year which were comparable to all pupils of a similar age. Half of Year 11 pupils achieved five GCSE passes, including in English and mathematics, at A* to C grades in 2015. Year 11 pupils attending the Forest Pathway College are mostly new arrivals to the area. Some have never received any formal education and speak little or no English when they arrive. Despite this, many are successfully entered for GCSEs and nearly all entrants achieved five passes at A* to G last year. Others, who arrive towards the end of the academic year, study English for speakers of other languages and entry level qualifications to gain access to higher level courses at further education colleges when they leave.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. All the required staff employment checks have been carried out and safeguarding systems are monitored carefully to ensure that pupils and staff are kept safe. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out to ensure that pupils are safe during off-site visits and trips. Child protection roles and responsibilities are known and understood by everyone, and staff receive regular safeguarding updates. They know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of extremism and how to refer any concerns they may have. All adults meet frequently to share information and agree how to support pupils who are a cause for concern. Staff receive approved training in de-escalation and positive handling approaches and this is renewed at the required intervals. The designated leader for safeguarding is working very closely with other professionals and officers from the local authority, to support young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and gang associations within Waltham Forest. This has led to clear protocols for sharing information being agreed across other agencies. Consequently, pupils who may be at risk are provided with support as quickly as possible.

Pupils are usually considerate in how they behave in lessons and when moving

around the buildings. The main site is well maintained and has appropriate systems for entering and leaving the building. Year 11 pupils who attend the Forest Pathway College in Walthamstow have permission to leave the site at break and lunch times because the building has limited catering facilities and no outdoor space. Although this is not ideal, staff monitor and record their whereabouts methodically and take every precaution to keep them safe. Parents, staff and pupils are confident that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Inspection findings

- The management committee provides support to all the federated pupil referral units in Waltham Forest that form part of the Hawkswood group. It is working to ensure that pupils benefit from high-quality resources and a committed staff team. For example, it is looking to acquire a new site for the Forest Pathway College to provide pupils with better facilities next year.
- Leaders have worked closely with the school improvement partner provided by the local authority to moderate their own professional judgements. Her observations and identified areas for improvement have helped to inform the school's self-assessment and further improvement planning.
- The number of pupils who are not in education, employment or training when they leave the school is low. Pupils are well supported to make appropriate applications and their transitions to mainstream schools and colleges are monitored carefully. This allows additional support to be provided to help them complete the courses they have chosen to study.
- Staff are appreciative of the support they get from leaders to develop their careers. They attend regular training, and are provided with opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools. Leaders take account of likely retirements and staff changes and make appropriate plans. This has allowed pupils to benefit from a secure and stable staff team since the last inspection.
- Parents and pupils are very positive about the school and the support they receive from leaders and staff.
- You have correctly identified that the attendance of some pupils remains an area for further improvement. Most pupils attend more regularly than they did because the importance of good attendance is regularly reinforced with families. Attendance concerns are followed up appropriately and further actions are agreed with local authority officers when pupils are persistently absent. The attendance and punctuality of pupils improves as they re-engage with their learning and see school in a more positive light. The attendance of all pupils, while still below the national average, is improving.
- Some pupils are temporarily excluded or need to be physically restrained as a result of more serious incidents or very challenging behaviours. A minority of pupils are repeatedly excluded. The school records all these incidents in a methodical and detailed manner but leaders are not using this information to recognise trends or identify when further strategies may be needed.
- Systems for analysing all the available assessment information and the impact of additional funding are not consistent across the school. This limits how well leaders can demonstrate that their interventions have been successful.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the number of temporary exclusions and physical restraints is reduced and monitored more closely to identify any patterns and agree further actions to be taken
- all available assessment information is systematically analysed to check that improvements are leading to better outcomes for individuals, groups and cohorts across all parts of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with members of the leadership team, a group of teachers and a group of support staff. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority and six members of the management committee, including the chairperson and the executive headteacher of the Hawkswood group. Both sites were visited to evaluate the different types of provision offered by the school and check that safeguarding arrangements were appropriate. Inspectors were joined by leaders to make short visits to all classes and look at examples of pupils' work. Pupils were spoken to throughout the inspection, including during lessons and over breaktimes. The 25 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered. The views of parents were taken account of using the one response to the online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own parental surveys. A range of documentation was reviewed, which related to safeguarding and the work of the school. The school meets most of the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. An accessibility plan and special educational needs information report have still to be added.