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Mr A Campbell
Headteacher
Cambridge School
61 Bryony Rd
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Dear Mr Campbell

Short inspection of Cambridge School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 2019 with Barney Geen, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The governing body and leadership team have overseen a period of increasing pupil numbers. Furthermore, the range of pupils' needs has changed over the past few years. You have ensured that pupils still receive an appropriate quality of education during this period.

You clearly explained that the school has a very varied intake and the school operates as 'two schools within a school'. The school has admitted pupils with an increased range of educational needs and you have grouped pupils into two main cohorts, one being pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, and the other being pupils with learning difficulties and additional needs. You and other leaders have ensured that all pupils are safe and are provided with a curriculum that matches their needs. However, you also provide the pupils with a sense of 'one school' through lunchtimes and assemblies together, and through the use of the newly introduced 'house system'.

Leadership tasks are shared among your team, with assistant heads and middle leaders taking responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. This works very effectively. You and your leadership team have a thorough understanding of the school and are systematically driving improvements.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is evident. Leaders and the governing body have ensured that safeguarding systems and procedures are fit for purpose. Regular training for staff ensures that the well-being and safety of the pupils are paramount.

Leaders make sure that all the required checks take place when recruiting staff and governors monitor safeguarding thoroughly on a termly basis. Pupils, parents and carers say that the school is a place where the pupils feel safe.

Leaders are aware that the pupils attending the school are particularly vulnerable. The school works well with other agencies to safeguard pupils. Pupils have a strong knowledge about how to keep themselves safe and are able to report what they would do to keep safe in specific scenarios, both in and outside of school.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed to look at specific areas of the school's work. The first area was to look at the action taken to improve pupils' attendance and reduce the rate of persistent absence. This was because your records show that attendance is below the national average.
- We found that leaders are implementing strategies for improving pupils' attendance. You ensure that pupils with attendance rates below 90% are monitored each week. You and other leaders have developed effective systems to support the different cohorts of pupils in a range of ways, such as attendance cards for those who respond to these. Pupils told us about the rewards available for good attendance and are encouraged by these.
- As a result of the school's work, pupils' attendance has improved in this academic year from 85% to 89% and persistent absence has dropped. Although this is a promising start, you are aware that attendance needs to remain a focus for the school.
- The second area we agreed to look at was the approaches leaders are taking to manage pupils' behaviour and reduce the number of exclusions. This is an area of work that you and other leaders have focused on developing.
- You have appointed key staff to oversee behaviour throughout the school. They have put in place systems. The information from these systems is used to make any changes required to classroom routines or behaviour plans.
- Staff are well supported to address any behaviour difficulties presented and to use the school's systems consistently. Teachers and leaders work together effectively to create individual behaviour plans for pupils. These help to ensure that all staff understand how to meet each pupil's needs.
- Pupils engage well with the school's rewards and house systems, which encourage positive behaviour. Pupils are positive about the behaviour in the school. They report no concerns around bullying.
- The inspection evidence found that pupils behave well, staff manage pupils'

behaviour effectively and the number of exclusions has reduced.

- We also looked at the extent to which the curriculum is helping pupils to achieve well, taking into account their different needs and abilities. We agreed to look at this to make sure the curriculum is matched to the needs of the pupils who are presently attending the school.
- Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's curriculum. It is clearly defined, with different pathways for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The rationale is clear and meets the needs of different groups of pupils well. The curriculum is well designed to prepare pupils for life after school, with a focus on life skills and independence.
- Pupils are positive about learning. They engage well with the curriculum. In most of the lessons we visited, the work was suitably matched to meet pupils' needs and abilities. Occasionally, however, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high across different subjects.
- The final area we agreed to focus on was the school's processes and procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and attainment. This is an area the school has spent considerable time developing and you wanted feedback on.
- Leaders collect information systematically about pupils' learning and they review this information effectively to inform future teaching. Assessment responsibilities are shared among the senior team, which works well together to support teachers.
- Pupils' individual goals are consistently visible in all classrooms and remind both staff and pupils of their targets. Helpful information grids are placed in pupils' books to support them in attaining their targets. You, together with other leaders, ensure that assessment information is used effectively to support pupils' good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high in all subjects taught
- pupils' attendance continues to remain a focus so that it improves still further.

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

Yours sincerely

Penny Barratt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, the assistant headteachers, the assessment lead and the 'higher level' teaching assistant with responsibility for behaviour. We held conversations with parents and the vice-chair of the governing body, had discussion with teachers and spoke with different pupils throughout the day. We visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and these were made jointly with you and the assistant headteachers. Inspectors scrutinised the school's attendance, curriculum and assessment procedures.