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Ms Eileen Shannon
Headteacher
Victoria Drive Primary Pupil Referral Unit
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Dear Ms Shannon

Short inspection of Victoria Drive Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 2017 with Denise James-Mason, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have shown impressive clarity and depth of commitment to ensuring that the absolute best outcomes for the pupils you work with are achieved. This is greatly valued by pupils, families and referring schools.

Leaders provide a purposeful and welcoming learning environment that reflects your commitment to providing the very best for your pupils. Highly effective teaching and care have ensured that pupils new to the school settle very quickly, despite their previous negative experiences of education. They engage very well with their learning because the stimulating curriculum is tailored to their needs and motivates them to achieve extremely well. You actively promote mainstream approaches to teaching and learning, ensuring that standards and the pace of learning remain consistent with mainstream practice. These strategies have ensured that pupils are able to successfully return to their home school at the appropriate time.

Staff, pupil and parental satisfaction is high. Those parents I spoke to reported that they feel happy with their child's progress at Victoria Drive Primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). One member of staff said that she was, 'proud to be part of the school', a view that was reflected in conversations with other staff during the inspection. The pupil and parent surveys illustrate a widespread belief that bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively. One pupil I spoke to said, 'Bullying? Not here!'

Middle leaders share your drive for improvement, and have devised ambitious plans to further develop the English, mathematics and computing curriculum this year.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. You are acutely aware of the vulnerability of your pupils and tenaciously lead agencies to work within and beyond the school to help keep pupils safe. Leaders and governors demonstrated a firm commitment to early intervention where pupils were identified as being at risk. Work with pupils affected by domestic violence, gang affiliation and knife crime has had a positive impact on attendance and the success of mainstream placements.

Robust and regular safeguarding training is undertaken by all staff. This has ensured that safeguarding responsibilities throughout the school are taken extremely seriously. Staff remain highly vigilant and alert to risks in the school and local community.

Inspection findings

- We first checked on the extent to which leaders and governors ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Leaders and governors provide rigorous challenge to other agencies involved in child protection, escalating concerns where necessary. This demonstrates your relentless drive to ensure that even the most vulnerable pupils and their families receive the support and care they need.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of the local context in relation to safeguarding. They rigorously hold leaders to account and provide clarity on how the curriculum helps children to keep themselves safe.
- All staff are clear about their role in helping to keep children safe. This has ensured that pupils and parents feel that the school is a safe place.
- Attendance is significantly better overall than in pupils' previous schools and there were only two fixed-term exclusions in 2016/17. There were no permanent exclusions.
- Pupils who have medical needs are well cared for. The quality of information you provide to healthcare services has enabled specific needs to be addressed swiftly and barriers to learning to be reduced.
- Next, we looked at how leaders measure the progress of all pupils from when they start to when they leave the school.
- At the point of referral, comprehensive checks on pupils' skills and aptitudes enable staff to accurately identify their individual needs and tailor the curriculum accordingly. As part of this assessment, the referring school provision is carefully considered to ensure that optimum conditions are in place to ensure that the pupil achieves well. Where issues are identified, specialist support is provided to the mainstream school.

- Pupils are typically with you for two terms. Despite the short nature of the placements, many pupils make strong gains in their literacy and numeracy as a result of highly effective teaching. However, progress in writing is not quite as strong. This is because previous negative experiences have led to some pupils feeling vulnerable, and therefore to resist writing at length. You have already identified this and implemented plans to improve attitudes to writing, and to build confidence in this area.
- Personal and social development progress is also tracked effectively to ensure that staff prepare pupils well for their learning. Pupils discuss with their teachers and tutors how well the lessons have gone. This activity is very beneficial in improving pupils' self-esteem and helping them to understand how to learn successfully. One parent I spoke to said that her daughter was, 'happier and wiser.'
- We also considered how effectively leaders address barriers to learning to ensure that the pupils make the most of their time with you.
- Your seamless multi-agency approach involves parents and home-school teachers and support staff. This builds capacity both within the mainstream school and families and helps to sustain the pupils' development after they finish their placement. This approach has been highly successful. In 2016/17, only two pupils remained with you full time, with all other pupils reintegrated into mainstream school or supported to transfer to suitable specialist provision. Pupils are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Targeted work with families around stress and the use of language is enabling pupils to develop trusting relationships in and out of school.
- Detailed and regular communication with other agencies promotes effective 'team around the child' working and ensures that consistent practice is applied. Consequently, pupils have been enabled to stay in, and on occasion thrive in, their home school where previously this was thought to be impossible.
- Innovative early intervention programmes have reduced identified risk. This has included a project with the local police to support children who have witnessed domestic violence, and football-based work aimed at preventing gang affiliation.
- The outreach team, working across 62 local schools, has developed creative and successful ways of supporting a wide range of pupils. For example, each Friday afternoon, pupils at risk of exclusion, and teaching assistants from mainstream schools, come together to end the week positively. This provides a healthy release for the pupils, an opportunity for teaching assistants to network, and for Victoria Drive PRU staff to model language and support strategies. This has shifted the thinking of some teaching assistants, who are now clear that behaviour is a form of communication.
- Finally, we looked at the extent to which leaders at all levels ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to achieve well and prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have introduced a range of programmes aimed at building pupils' resilience and love of learning. This has helped to raise pupils' expectations and

increased their ability to reflect on their own progress. For example, one pupil correctly identified that he no longer needed to be at the PRU.

- It is evident through their personal development lessons that pupils are very well taught about online safety, the risk of radicalisation, sexual orientation, and personal and social responsibility. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those from ethnic minorities, to write at length so that they make substantial progress with their writing skills
- the curriculum development work in English, mathematics and computing is fully established.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wandsworth. 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, removing barriers to learning and measuring pupils' progress. Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body 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, attendance data, records of pupils' progress and behaviour, and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. The inspection took into consideration 18 responses to the staff survey. There were too few responses to Parent View to generate a meaningful analysis.