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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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27 February 2018

Mr Richard Yarwood
Headteacher
Oaktree School
Chase Side
Southgate
London
N14 4HN

Dear Mr Yarwood

Short inspection of Oaktree School

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018 with Joy Barter, 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

You became headteacher at Oaktree School after the last inspection, first in an interim capacity and then in a substantive post. Governors, many of whom were also new to their roles, together with your leadership team, have provided you with effective support. You have used the areas for development identified at the last inspection as a focus for school improvement and created effective plans to address them.

A particular area for attention has been to provide a greater range of 16 to 19 study programmes, including access to a wider range of accredited courses. This was evident during the inspection through, for example, the Sports Leaders' Award led by a local football club. Students were planning sports sessions for people with disabilities. They worked together, practising the delivery of their own and each other's planned sessions.

You have also developed governors' understanding of assessment and progress. The governors I met with were able to describe clearly the school's processes. Written records of their meetings show governors challenge you and other leaders effectively.

The values of 'BEAR' are promoted and understood by all pupils. They encourage pupils to be brave (B), treat everyone the same (E), aim high (A) and respect and care for each other (R). Parents and carers told inspectors that their children feel happy and safe at school. As one parent said: 'There is a real community atmosphere in the school, where everyone, including staff, pupils, parents and carers, is valued and respected equally.'

The student voice is active and has a say in the running of the school. For example,

the student voice recently conducted a 'stay safe' questionnaire for which pupils drew up the questions. New members are elected to the council each term, which gives many pupils the opportunity to contribute their ideas and views about school practices.

You shared with me the curriculum and assessment strategies developed by the staff at your school. You explained how these work, and how they evidence the progress all the pupils in the school are making. We also looked at pupils' learning journals, which show evidence of progress using photographs and clear commentary from staff. These arrangements are effective in ensuring that pupils are given work that matches their needs.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Your leaders and staff are clear about their responsibility to keep pupils safe and they receive regular training in order to do so. They are aware of some of the risks pupils might face including neglect, abuse or exploitation and are therefore vigilant in identifying any signs. You have established clear processes for referrals both within the school and to other agencies and these are timely and appropriate. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding that runs through the school.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection said they feel safe in school. They talk knowledgeably about how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including online. Pupils are especially clear that adults are there to help them if someone is getting hurt or bullied or has a problem. Supervision at playtimes and lunchtimes is well organised to ensure that all pupils are kept safe. One pupil reported: 'I feel really safe at school. There are teachers who you can talk to if you need to.'

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at how effectively you and your leaders promote and improve pupils' attendance. While you have established clear systems for recording the attendance of pupils, the school's absence figures are still high in comparison with national figures.
- You have rightly identified that there are a minority of pupils whose attendance is not yet good. As a result, you have recently introduced a 'pick up from home service' at the beginning of the week for those pupils who find it difficult to come into school. While it is still too early to judge the effectiveness of this strategy, you have already seen some improvements.
- A further area for investigation was to look at the progress pupils make from their starting points. You and your leaders have implemented a new curriculum, which is closely linked to the school's assessment and tracking system. You provided information about the progress pupils made and the outcomes they achieved. This shows that these pupils met and exceeded the targets you had set for them.
- Your present assessment system is closely linked to a national system, which will be

changing soon. We discussed the need to develop this as the national system changes.

- You have focused on increasing middle leaders' contribution to the assessment of pupils' progress. Middle leaders were able to explain in great detail their involvement in the assessment process. They spoke about how they support their colleagues to identify and check pupils' progress from their starting points. Middle leaders are now more confident in supporting teachers to use assessment to inform their planning. They ensure that the targets set for each pupil, while aspirational, are achievable. As a result, activities are carefully targeted to the needs of individual pupils so that they make good progress across all year groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve attendance by looking for further strategies to encourage more pupils to attend regularly
- they further develop assessment processes in light of future national changes.

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

Yours sincerely

Penny Barratt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the team inspector and I met with you, your deputy and other leaders. I talked to the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and the school improvement partners from the local authority. You and your deputy joined us when we visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work. We spoke to pupils and staff throughout the day around the school, in the dining room and outside at break and lunchtimes. We met with a few parents at the beginning and end of the school day. I looked at the responses to questionnaires, both the inspection questionnaires and those you have conducted in school. I read the school development plan, safeguarding information, records, and data on pupils' achievement and attendance.