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Dear Ms Fernandes

No formal designation inspection of The Crest Academy

Following my visit with Sarah Murphy-Dutton and Carolyn Dickinson, Her Majesty's Inspectors, and Patricia Sloneki, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 4 July 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, the management of pupils' behaviour and the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They spoke to senior leaders, the E-Act regional director and the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors observed pupils as they arrived at the start and departed at the end of the school day, and as they socialised together at break and lunchtimes. They spoke to a large number of pupils throughout the day about the school's safeguarding arrangements and their experiences at the school. Inspectors spoke to a number of staff, including those teachers new to the school and teaching assistants. They visited lessons to determine pupils' attitudes to their learning. They scrutinised a range of documents provided by school leaders, including attendance and exclusion information, analysis of pupils' behaviour and incident logs. Inspectors considered the school's record-

keeping of those pupils who have left the school and those studying at alternative providers. They spoke to the inclusion lead and SEN coordinator (SENCo) and observed the support offered to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those new to learning English.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders manage pupils' behaviour effectively and ensure that the provision for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continues to be good.

Context

Crest Academy is an 11 to 18 secondary school, within the E-Act multi-academy trust. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Almost half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is above average. The proportion of students who receive SEN support is just above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN and/or disability or those with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

The headteacher and school leaders are committed to ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and that they keep staff and pupils safe. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with statutory guidelines, and the single central record is compliant. The headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead keep accurate and timely records of referrals to the local authority and external agencies. They have cultivated constructive partnerships with the local community and police in order to safeguard pupils. Vulnerable pupils benefit from highly personalised, well-targeted support to keep them safe. The trust's regional director of education ensures that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

Staff receive regular training around current legislation and are knowledgeable about the risks facing pupils in the wider community. These include gang affiliation, knife crime, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the potential for radicalisation. Consequently, staff are highly vigilant in identifying any potential signs, and they know how to pass on information in a timely and appropriate way.

Pupils across the school say that they feel safe on site and could name members of staff who they trusted to share their concerns with. They say that bullying is rare and that staff quickly quell any incidents where disputes erupt. Pupils requiring more support, have quiet spaces where they can socialise with friends or seek help from the school's counsellor. Pupils appear clear about the rewards and sanctions process, including the Crest 'C system', the use of exit rooms and the internal exclusion unit. They receive relevant information about how they can stay safe

through assemblies, drop down days and the personal, social, health and economic programme.

Leadership of behaviour management is strong. School leaders work hard to encourage good attendance and punctuality and, as a result, persistent absence has reduced year-on-year. Leaders regularly report to the E-Act raising achievement board, identifying any prevalent issues and the reasons and actions to address them. They have an accurate understanding of where behaviour is a concern and a strategic plan to address it. Year heads and pastoral managers know pupils well and can anticipate those who require timely additional support. A range of interventions, including mentoring, counselling and small group work, encourages pupils to manage their behaviours and increase their self-esteem. Leaders carefully track the rewards and sanctions recorded electronically by staff, in order to identify any potential concerns. However, they admit, as with the safeguarding records, that minor tweaks to how they hold this information might ease closer analysis. They rightly anticipate possible pressure points, for instance at the end of the school day, and deploy staff appropriately to keep pupils safe. The behaviour team has excellent relationships with pupils. They are committed to supporting pupils to stay safe and learn in an appropriate environment.

Where teaching is strong, pupils work hard, are engaged in their learning and make good progress over time. However, some teachers, particularly those new to the school, need further support in managing pupils' behaviours for learning. Too much time is lost with low-level disruption and getting pupils back on task. Pupils say that this is particularly true when there are in-year changes of teachers or cover teachers. Leaders have identified supporting new teachers as an on-going priority.

The extensive school site poses some challenges for school leaders. A school 'line up' happens three times a day and is intended to ensure that staff know where pupils are and are able to prepare them better for the next learning session. However, leaders accept that they need to give further thought to the rationale for this activity, the allocated time and the consistency of approach by pupils and staff. Equally, leaders accept that better communication between senior leaders and staff would ensure that there is a consistent understanding of the rationale behind specific actions or decisions.

Leaders have ensured effective provision for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those new to learning English. Leaders aim to provide an inclusive education for all pupils irrespective of their SEN or their aptitude in English acquisition. Consequently, they provide a bespoke programme for some pupils which combines mainstream lessons and specific learning support. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of this provision and know where they could make improvements. For instance, they have already provided further training for teaching assistants so that they can further meet the needs of pupils in mainstream lessons. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed effectively to support specific pupils. They track pupils' progress against specific targets and

provide weekly reports to the SENCo. Teaching assistants welcome plans for the next academic year to link them more closely to particular departments so that they can offer subject-specific support to those learning in mainstream classes. The wider regional E-Act team support and monitor closely pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities at the school. Pupils report that they feel well supported.

External support

The school benefits from being part of the E-Act multi-academy trust and specifically through the London and Buckingham regional cluster.

Priorities for further improvement

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- strengthen the way teachers new to the school are supported in promoting high standards of behaviour
- ensure that internal record-keeping enables accessible analysis of information
- improve day-to-day communication between senior leaders and staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews

Her Majesty's Inspector