

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Anne Sturman
Principal
Kennington Park Academy
20 Kennington Park Gardens
Kennington
London
SE11 4AX

Dear Ms Sturman

Short inspection of Kennington Park Academy

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 2017 with Clare Gillies, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In July 2014, the school joined the Parallel Learning Trust (PLT), which currently has three other schools catering for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Since this time, the school has expanded the number of pupils on roll from 30 to 50, and the number of classes from three to five. To ensure that these additional pupils receive the same good quality of education, care and support as other pupils, you and the governors have effectively reorganised staff responsibilities. Since joining the PLT, school leaders have strengthened the existing programme of cooperation with local special and mainstream schools. The outreach team works effectively with vulnerable families to ensure that they can support their children's learning at home.

Together with the support of the chief executive officer, directors of the PLT, governors and senior leaders, you have established a culture of high expectations. With their support, you have addressed successfully the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement has risen in reading, writing and mathematics because of more effective teaching and successful deployment of teaching assistants. Nevertheless, senior staff have accurately identified that the progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, is not as rapid as it should be. Firm plans are already in place to deal with this issue.

Since the school became an academy in 2014, the structure and composition of the governing body have changed. Governors bring a wide range of skills to the school and are drawn from a variety of fields, including education, finance, law, human resources and local government. They successfully support and hold senior leaders to account and increasingly challenge the information provided to them by the school. Governors support the school's aim to prepare pupils successfully for the next steps of their education.

In September 2015, leaders introduced a new assessment system, which was refined further in January 2017. Teachers are increasingly confident and effective in using the new procedures. However, information on pupils' progress for some foundation subjects is not included in the system. As a result, school leaders do not always have the full information necessary to make decisions about the best support for pupils. Leaders already have plans in place to incorporate this information into the school's assessment system.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together with the other leaders, you have established a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance, in which the safety of pupils is given top priority. High levels of staff supervision in classrooms, around the school site and during trips and visits help keep pupils safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school provides a safe and caring environment in which pupils feel comfortable about sharing their anxieties. This is because you and your colleagues are good listeners and provide effective ways of dealing with any concerns.

The school's comprehensive safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's most recent guidance and contains helpful references to, and contact details for, the local authority safeguarding officers. All staff training, including that for the designated and deputy safeguarding leads, is up to date. Staff were able to demonstrate the impact of training. For example, in discussion with inspectors, they described how they would spot the signs that pupils may need early help. They are familiar with the school's procedures and practice, particularly those regarding physical intervention. Staff work effectively in partnership with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help that they need.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to look at pupils' progress, and in particular the progress of the least- and most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. This was because there is no published data for schools catering for pupils who have similar kinds of need as this one. The school's own information about pupils' progress for 2016 was not representative of the pupils' progress because of the small group sizes and because of the large proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times of the year.

- Since the last inspection, pupils' progress has steadily improved because of better teaching. The school's information for 2016 shows that overall, pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, we agree that the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not being challenged enough to reach their full potential. The least able pupils achieve well because of the effective support and care they receive from staff and therapists.
- The school's information for pupils currently on roll, confirmed by our visits to classrooms and our scrutiny of pupils' work, shows that pupils make good progress from their varying starting points. Since September 2016, over a third of the pupils have been reintegrated successfully into mainstream settings.
- We then looked at how effective leaders have been in improving the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection, you and the governors have increased the membership of the senior leadership team from two to three, and appointed an additional teacher, two learning advisers and one part-time general assistant. This has provided increased capacity to ensure that the additional pupils on roll receive the same good quality of education, care and support as other pupils.
- You have ensured that there is an effective training and development programme for all staff. For example, staff have received training in providing the right levels of support to pupils. This has ensured that pupils receive helpful guidance on their work so that they can apply themselves, while not being too dependent on adults to guide their learning. The evidence from this inspection indicates that the training has been effective, for both teachers and teaching assistants, in improving pupils' ability to think for themselves.
- Over the last 18 months, you have also successfully overseen a programme of building works and refurbishment to make the building fit for its purpose. The building now provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment for pupils to enjoy.
- Since the last inspection, leaders and staff have worked effectively with local schools to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning across all classes. For example, staff have formed a particularly successful partnership with a local group of independent special schools to share good practice and to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' work. Staff spoke positively of the quality of training and support they have received, which are tailored to their individual needs. However, we agreed that teachers need to provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length and to extend their vocabulary and understanding. This is particularly so for the most able pupils to achieve their full potential.

- Finally, we looked at pupils' attendance. Leaders work very effectively with families to ensure that pupils attend regularly. In 2016, there was very little difference in rates of attendance for different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. As a result, attendance is above national figures for similar schools and very close to that of mainstream primary schools. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts to help their children attend regularly and of its work in general. One parent commented, 'Staff work with you to help our children so that they want to stay at the school.' Parents reported that many of their families had no father figure at home and that the school was particularly successful in providing positive male role models for their children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged and the school's other most-able pupils, to write at length and extend their vocabulary, so that they achieve their potential.

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

Yours sincerely

David Scott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with the principal, chief executive officer of the trust, senior and middle leaders and other staff
- a telephone conversation with the chair of governors and two representatives from the local authority
- joint visits to classrooms with the principal
- scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils
- informal discussions with parents in person during the school day
- analysis of parents' responses to the school's own surveys and staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaire
- a scrutiny of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, safeguarding information and records, and data on pupils' achievement and attendance
- a review of the school's website.