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6 June 2019

Ms Laura McGlashan
Burnt Mill Academy
First Avenue
Harlow
Essex
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Dear Ms McGlashan

No formal designation inspection of Burnt Mill Academy

Following my visit with Jason Howard, Her Majesty's Inspector and Gerard Batty, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 22 May 2019, 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 aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school.

Inspectors' evidence confirms that leaders are effective in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and in managing pupils' behaviour. They ensure that there are high expectations for pupils to achieve well across the curriculum.

Evidence

Inspectors, accompanied by leaders, visited lessons in a range of subjects and reviewed the work of pupils in their books. We met with you, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust and other leaders. We spoke with the chair of the local governing body by telephone, met with a representative from the local authority and spoke with pupils about their experiences at the school.

Inspectors reviewed documents relating to behaviour, attendance, exclusions, pupil movement, complaints and safeguarding arrangements. We visited another site where education is provided on behalf of the school.

Context

The school is currently being led by a head of school. Her work is overseen by the CEO of the Burnt Mill Academy Trust. The head of school has been appointed as headteacher from September 2019.

During the inspection, we wanted to look into how well leaders manage pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils with SEND. We also wanted to see how effective the school is at supporting pupils to the end of key stage 4.

We pursued these lines of enquiry because concerns had been raised with Ofsted suggesting that some pupils with SEND were not well supported, that behaviour was managed in an overly negative way and that some pupils were pressurised into leaving the school before the end of key stage 4. In addition, published performance data indicated a fall in entries at GCSE for pupils in modern foreign languages and humanities in 2018. We wanted to see how effective provision is in these subjects.

Provision for pupils with SEND

You explained that there were some deficiencies in SEND provision in the past. However, you have acted on guidance you received from an external agency regarding SEND provision and have addressed the areas which needed to be better. You assess pupils' needs when they join the school and give pupils the help they need. You pay for additional time from an educational psychologist to ensure that you have sufficient access to expert advice. You train staff in how to work with pupils with SEND and you make appropriate adjustments to help these pupils meet your high standards. Provision for pupils with SEND is now strong.

Pupils with SEND have full access to the curriculum and are motivated to learn. The number of incidents of poor behaviour from pupils with SEND is low. The proportion of these pupils who are persistently absent from school is below the national average. Pupils with SEND benefit from the same high expectations as other pupils. This helps them to make strong progress in their studies.

Behaviour

You and other leaders have an inclusive approach to behaviour management. You model the approaches you expect staff to adopt and there are positive relationships between staff and pupils. You and your team have effective systems for managing pupils' behaviour. Low-level disruption is rare and carefully monitored. You use the information you gather to identify negative trends in behaviour and to address these before they become problematic.

Some pupils are educated away from the main school because of the challenging behaviour they have demonstrated. The provision they receive is considered carefully. It is based on personalised learning plans constructed with a keen

awareness of individual pupils' needs. You and other leaders have secure processes in place to check on the attendance, progress and well-being of these pupils. You

have time-specific programmes to reintegrate them into the main school. One of your measures of success is how quickly they return.

Pupils who have left before the end of key stage 4

A small number of parents and carers have taken the decision to remove pupils from the school to educate them at home. You follow appropriate procedures in reporting this to the local authority. In some cases, you have felt that the decision of parents was not in the best interests of the pupils concerned. You have advised the local authority of your concerns. This has led to these pupils returning to mainstream education.

Modern foreign languages and humanities

A feature of the quality of provision we saw in the school is leaders' and teachers' uncompromising high expectations, including in modern foreign languages and humanities. Regardless of pupils' ability, needs or individual circumstance, you set demanding work which challenges them and helps them to fulfil their potential. This is effective in motivating pupils and helping them to make strong progress.

External support

You and other leaders work well with external agencies in securing and promoting pupils' well-being. For example, you work with a range of agencies to protect pupils from, and teach them about, the dangers of gang and drug cultures.

Priorities for further improvement

- None identified at this time in relation to the aspects of provision considered during this inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings
Her Majesty's Inspector