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Mr Martin Tissot
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Dear Mr Tissot

Short inspection of Bishop Douglass School Finchley

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 2018 with David Booth, 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

You, your senior team, staff and governors provide a nurturing yet challenging environment which allows all pupils to thrive. The senior team is accurate and forthright in its evaluation of the school and continues to drive further improvements. The middle leaders make a very strong contribution to the school's work. They have ownership of school-wide initiatives, which, coupled with the use of a range of leadership strategies, ensures that pupils make substantial and sustained progress.

Parents, carers, pupils and staff are happy with and in the school. Pupils are polite, diligent and display a work ethic which shows how highly they value their education and how much they enjoy their learning experience. The use of literacy strategies is a strength of the school. One such strategy is the 'word of the day', which pupils are encouraged to use verbally and to integrate in their written work.

A culture of positive challenge is provided by the governing body, which supports and holds leaders to account. Governors and colleagues from the multi-academy

trust have a clear understanding of areas of focus for the school, and they assist the senior team in its drive for improvement.

The inspection report on the predecessor school included the recommendation that leaders develop pupils' independence to enable them to work with enthusiasm and excitement. The school has been extremely successful in this. Pupils are given many opportunities to foster the skills required for them to take control of their own learning. For example, pupils can attend 'evening study' sessions where they can complete their homework, and they are supported by staff only when required.

Additionally, the inspection report asked the school to improve the progress of the most able pupils so that more of them achieved the highest grades. The school has been largely successful in this. Recent GCSE results showed that this group of pupils made more progress than their peers nationally from the same starting points. You have rightly identified the need to further improve outcomes in mathematics for the most able pupils and those eligible for the pupil premium. The plans you have put in place are already making a difference in ensuring that these groups of pupils achieve well in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors understand their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe, and they see this as a high priority. All the required staff employment checks have been completed. Records show that referrals to external agencies about vulnerable pupils are appropriate, timely and followed up. All staff understand the latest guidance given in 'Keeping children safe in education'.

School leaders conduct an annual survey of pupils on all aspects of their safety and well-being. The results of this are used to plan assemblies and activities for pupils to address their specific areas of need or concern. Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures through effective and regular training. If they have a concern about a pupil, they know the correct action to take.

Inspection findings

- I first explored how the school has achieved such high standards in English and in a range of other subjects, including religious studies, the arts, physical education (PE) and sociology, and what leaders are doing to sustain this. We did this because recent GCSE results showed pupils made far more progress than their peers nationally in these subjects.
- In English, teachers use a range of strategies to inspire and enthuse pupils. Pupils are confident in discussions and routinely give rich and varied answers to demonstrate their breadth of knowledge. An example of the great depth of their understanding of the subject is the way in which they skilfully critique the work of their peers, offering insights which notably enhance the writing they produce.
- We found that the core curriculum is complemented by a broad range of subjects, allowing all pupils to study subjects which they enjoy and value.

Leaders of religious studies have given careful consideration to teaching methods and the way that pupils' knowledge and skills are built up over time. High-quality teaching and systematic leadership of the arts, PE and sociology mean that pupils make excellent progress. On the occasions when pupils do fall behind, the school's comprehensive programme of interventions supports them to catch up. The strategies employed are embedded in the culture of the school and are clearly sustainable over time. We also explored what the school is doing to raise standards in mathematics, especially for the most able and for those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium. Recent GCSE results showed that the most able did not make as much progress as their peers nationally in mathematics. They also showed that those who are eligible for the pupil premium did not make as much progress from their starting points as other pupils nationally.

- During the inspection, we found that, through your own analysis of test results and lesson monitoring, you and other senior leaders and governors have a good grasp of the issues in mathematics and have an effective strategic plan in place to address them. Initiatives include the use of additional intervention time to support learning in lessons. Mathematics teachers have had support from the trust's leader of mathematics to help them teach higher-level concepts and skills. Pupils' books show that this is already having an impact, and outcomes for the most able are improving quickly.
- In addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils, leaders' starting point is that there is consistently high-quality teaching of mathematics for all pupils. This is supplemented with careful use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils whatever their prior attainment. For example, each disadvantaged pupil in Year 11 has a mathematics mentor to offer bespoke support and supplementary lessons each week. Consequently, the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in mathematics are improving quickly across all year groups.
- Finally, we considered how the school has reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions and what leaders are doing to sustain this. We did this because the number of fixed-term exclusions issued by the school has reduced significantly since 2014 and is now below national averages.
- Leaders have focused on improving behaviour at the school. The introduction of a new strategy allows any incidents to be dealt with and resolved before they escalate. All staff are empowered by this system and pupils approach either associate staff or teaching staff for support on any issues pertinent to them. Leaders have also launched a 'parent forum', where parents can raise any concerns with a school leader and a resolution is found. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions has continued to fall and remains below national averages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the strategies to improve mathematics are continued so that all pupils, including the most able and those eligible for the pupil premium, achieve as well in mathematics as they do in other subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Westminster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnet. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amy Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, other senior leaders, teachers and staff. We also met with school governors and spoke to the head of the multi-academy trust by telephone. We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the register of the checks made on staff. We visited lessons across the school and looked at pupils' work. We spoke to pupils and evaluated the views of the 27 parents who completed Parent View, and of the 39 staff who completed the staff questionnaire.