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Beth Kobel  
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Dear Ms Kobel

### **Short inspection of Preston Manor School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 2016 with Clementina Aina and Amy Jackson, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 predecessor school, Preston Manor All-Through Foundation School, was judged to be good in May 2012.

### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You, your senior leaders, staff and governors have high ambitions for the school and its pupils. You have an accurate and honest appreciation of the strengths of the school and focused plans to secure further improvements. You have made key appointments to the senior leadership team. This has helped to ensure that your improvement plans are realised, while establishing a culture of high aspirations, accountability and integrity.

Since your arrival in September 2015, you have strived to amalgamate the lower and upper schools into one cohesive community school. Improvements have included the formation of a strategic leadership group, revised governors' committees and common policies, procedures and a single school website. Staff on both school sites are now working more regularly together and initiatives such as the 'pupil's learning identity' are being implemented across the key stages. As a consequence, there is far more consistency and cross-fertilisation of experience and skills being encouraged. However, professional development opportunities are yet to extend across both sites to support all-through learning and ensure that pupils feel part of one school.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified during the school's last inspection in May 2012. You are rightly proud of the extensive teaching and learning programme, which has created a culture of self-reflection. Staff are willing to try out new ideas and embrace change when necessary. Staff focus on 'autonomy, challenge and effective feedback' when designing activities for pupils – they refer to this as the 'ACE' teaching identity. Training is regular, relevant and delivered by lead practitioners who encourage staff to share their ideas and expertise. Staff encourage pupils to be resilient, active, collaborative and reflective in their learning. Your continual drive to improve teaching and learning in this way has resulted in improved pupils' outcomes and progress across all key stages.

You and your leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You regularly check that pupils and groups of pupils are making at least the progress expected of them. You analyse assessment information carefully and know which pupils are at risk of making less progress than their peers. You have identified that some disadvantaged pupils, while making more progress than their peers nationally, need further support to match the very high levels of progress made by the majority of pupils in school. Further analysis needs to be done to measure the impact of the numerous initiatives in place to help these pupils make better progress. You have very high expectations of the progress your most-able pupils should make. Currently the school is focusing on raising, still further, the level of challenge for these pupils.

Governors are an experienced and proactive group who are well trained, ask searching questions and work effectively with school leaders. They have ensured financial stability while securing further capacity in the senior leadership team to strengthen the links between the upper and lower school.

Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the large school site. Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' conduct and relationships are strong. Pupils mix well together and are articulate and polite. They know right from wrong and show mutual respect and tolerance towards each other in this diverse learning environment. The 'Preston Manor Behaviour Panel' involves 29 pupils who promote positive behaviour and an anti-bullying ethos across the school. This initiative has been instrumental in empowering pupils to take control of their own behaviour.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures were inspected by Ofsted during a one-day, no formal designation inspection in January 2016. The outcomes of this inspection judged the school's arrangements to meet requirements.

Leaders and governors understand their statutory responsibilities regarding keeping children safe and see it as a high priority. All the required staff employment checks have been done and records of referrals to external

agencies are appropriately kept. Training for staff is regular and up to date. A particular focus has been on the prevention of extremism and radicalisation and issues to do with female genital mutilation, gang involvement and child sexual exploitation.

Pupils receive a range of information through the personal, social and health education programme, assemblies and registration time so that they can keep themselves safe. E-safety is a high priority and is taught across all key stages. School leaders and the Behaviour Panel have focused this year on heightening pupils' awareness of issues relating to mental health. The school has promoted an open culture, where pupils feel safe to discuss their concerns, knowing that any issues will be dealt with quickly and efficiently. This view was endorsed by parents who responded to the online survey Parent View.

Attendance is systematically tracked, particularly for more vulnerable pupils. Leaders know which pupils attend school less regularly and use individualised support packages to encourage better attendance. These are having an impact and consequently attendance overall is improving.

## **Inspection findings**

- Children arrive in reception with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. When they leave the early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development exceeds the national average. While historically boys have made less progress than girls, school leaders have successfully closed the gap this year.
- Provision in the early years is strong. The bright and modern new lower school encourages collaborative and creative play and learning. The indoor area is well organised and displays celebrate children's work, particularly their writing, which has been a focus this year. The recently improved outdoor area offers children a creative space to continue their learning.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has improved over time. As a result, the number of pupils who achieve well in the phonics check exceeds the national average. The focus on reading for pleasure ensures that reading outcomes at the end of key stage 1 are also strong, again exceeding the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and writing by the end of key stage 1 by achieving expected outcomes. Current school information shows that this will improve still further this year.
- The current Year 6 are the first group in the school to take national assessments at the end of key stage 2. A large number of pupils have joined this year group since its formation in Year 1, many of whom speak English as an additional language. School leaders have focused relentlessly on meeting the individual needs of pupils in this cohort. As a result, information provided by the school indicates that all pupils have made good progress from their starting points.
- Outcomes and progress at key stage 4 have been very strong over time across a range of subjects. The majority of pupils make very good progress from different starting points and achieve higher than the national average.

School leaders know, however, that some pupils, while doing better than pupils nationally, do not make as much progress as others at the school. This is true, for instance, of the most able disadvantaged pupils. There is a relentless focus on minimising these gaps which, year on year, have significantly reduced. This looks set to improve again this year.

- School leaders are rightly proud of the large sixth-form provision. The 16 to 19 study programmes are suitably tailored to meet students' individual social, emotional and academic needs. Leadership of this area is strong and much weight is given to preparing students for university, apprenticeships and work. Students have very high aspirations, work extremely hard and are fully involved in the life of the school. Consequently, students make very good progress across a range of A-level and vocational courses.
- Middle leaders are an experienced and cohesive group. They work well together, both in the upper and lower school, ensuring that teaching is of the highest quality. Nevertheless, more needs to be done by senior leaders to encourage collaborative working across both sites.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or with an education, health and care plan is good. The school runs two specialist areas and attempts to incorporate pupils with special educational needs or disability as much as possible in the full life of the school. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and well-trained teaching assistants work closely with classroom teachers to support these pupils. Consequently, particularly in English, pupils make similar progress to others at the school. Leaders are rightly targeting extra support in mathematics as this has been identified as an area in which some of these pupils need to make accelerated progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted. A range of activities, events, trips and speakers are mapped across the year to enable pupils to reflect on life in modern Britain and explore fundamental British values. The school council is respected as a forum where pupils can actively contribute to the decision-making process.
- School leaders work hard to foster profitable links and effective relationships with the wider community, other schools and organisations, businesses and parents. They achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) in 2015 for their proactive work with parents. This achievement was endorsed by the very positive comments made by parents responding to the online survey Parent View.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- groups of pupils identified as at risk of underachieving are given rapid and effective support, so that they make similar progress to their peers
- interventions to support underachieving pupils are regularly analysed to make sure that they are having an impact on their progress

- opportunities for staff to share skills and expertise are exploited more fully across all key stages, and pupils are encouraged to feel part of one school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, 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**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, other senior leaders and teachers across both sites. They met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, information on the progress of current pupils and the register of checks made on staff. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in both the upper and lower school. They visited lessons across the key stages to gather evidence on particular strands of teaching, learning and assessment.