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16 February 2017

James Wilson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wilson

Short inspection of Westminster City School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2017 with Laurence King, 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 the school was judged to be good in January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since you became headteacher in 2014, you have focused on improving further the quality of education that the school offers its pupils. You have emphasised to staff and pupils the importance of gaining the best possible GCSE and A-level results. You have worked hard to ensure the school's curriculum prioritises this aim. As a result, pupils' examination results have continued to improve. You have also prioritised behaviour management and pupils understand that they are expected to behave well. Together with governors, you recognise that this is a continuing priority for the school.

You are ambitious for the pupils at the school. You are proud of their achievements and strive to ensure they do the best they can. You have identified the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, the school has a strong culture of improvement. Pupils are positive about the school and the quality of teaching they receive. However, information on current pupils' performance is not always readily available for evaluation.

The school operates an early entry curriculum for GCSE which guides pupils on to appropriate courses of study. You believe strongly that this motivates pupils to do as well as or better than they would have done within a typical timeframe. However, since this curriculum was introduced, the way that GCSE results are reported nationally has changed. It is now based on pupils' results when they first

sit an examination. As a result, current national performance measures indicate that pupils at Westminster City School make less than expected progress compared to others nationally with the same starting points. However, information presented by the school, which includes results from re-sits, shows that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress by the end of Year 11.

You have done much to ensure that the quality of teaching across all subjects has improved. Consequently, pupils make good progress. The quality of pupils' writing has improved, but some inconsistency remains. Teachers give helpful feedback on pupils' work. However, not all pupils heed this advice to extend their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Staff have received appropriate training and are aware of the risks facing pupils and how to respond. Recruitment procedures follow the latest statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Minor administrative errors in record-keeping found by the inspection team were quickly rectified.

School leaders create an environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils report that bullying is rare and staff act quickly to resolve issues. Pupils know who they can talk to if need be, and say that teachers and leaders are approachable.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching and learning enables all pupils to make good progress. Senior leaders directly support and monitor subjects previously identified as underperforming. Pupils in lessons are engaged and keen to answer teachers' challenging questions. Pupils were observed reading fluently. Work in pupils' books and in lessons shows that they are challenged to develop their thinking.
- Leaders and staff encourage pupils to be aspirational for the future. Leaders give sixth form students effective advice and guidance on applying to university. Increasing numbers are applying to and gaining places at the best universities, which is celebrated by the school. Leaders make the most of the school's location in central London by forging close links with local businesses. This benefits pupils through effective mentoring schemes and work experience placements.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, which are close to the national average. GCSE results have improved and students also make good progress in the sixth form. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning and set challenging targets. The school's own assessment information indicates that current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make the progress expected of them across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have designed the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. For example, the last lesson of the day is set aside so that pupils can seek additional help from teachers. This is effective in supporting their learning and progress. Governors and leaders are proud of the school's comprehensive admissions policy. The most able pupils sit GCSE examinations early and, if they meet their target early, can start A-level courses in Year 11. Sixth form students

say that they appreciate the opportunities this innovative curriculum has given them.

- Leaders take swift action when necessary to manage pupils' behaviour and use fixed-term exclusion as one of several strategies. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions is high compared to the national average. Governors recognise that behaviour management is a continuing priority for the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct in lessons and feel well supported by leaders. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's behaviour policy.
- Governors offer effective support and challenge to school leaders. Governors accurately evaluate the work of leaders and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the school. They are focused on ensuring that the education provided continues to improve.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- effective behaviour management strategies continue to support improvements in pupils' behaviour
- information on how well pupils are doing is readily available to help leaders and governors accurately evaluate the quality of education provided.

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

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors agreed to prioritise the following areas with the headteacher at the start of the inspection:

- Does the quality of teaching, learning and assessment enable all pupils, including middle- and high-ability pupils, to make good progress?
- Are pupils guided effectively in making choices for the future?
- Do leaders and governors ensure that pupils' progress and outcomes remain good or better?
- Does the curriculum for all subjects provide sufficient challenge for pupils of all abilities? Is behaviour managed effectively to enable all pupils to access the curriculum?

- Do leaders and governors take effective action to protect children and promote their safety?

Inspectors carried out the following activities to explore the identified areas during the inspection:

- Inspectors toured the site with the headteacher at the start of the school day.
- They visited lessons across a range of subjects jointly with a school leader. They looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and sixth form students.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website. They reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and strategic development plans, safeguarding policy and procedures, and curriculum and assessment information. They also checked the school's records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 69 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 29 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.