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14 March 2019

Ms Jenny Smith
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Dear Ms Smith

Short inspection of Frederick Bremer School

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 2019 with Shaun Dodds, 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 Frederick Bremer School was judged to be good in December 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since the previous inspection, you and your team have focused consistently on improving the opportunities provided for pupils and raising their achievement. There is a strong inclusion ethos, which accompanies the school's robust moral purpose. Pupils' attainment in 2018 GCSE examinations showed a continuing trend of improvement, particularly in English and some of the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) subjects. You have rightly prioritised improving pupils' attendance and behaviour, as well as the introduction of learning and teaching non-negotiables to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The school community shares and models the values of 'respect, responsibility and integrity', which support and sustain this improvement. Your focus on teaching and learning, through a combination of sharing good practice and developing and improving the accuracy and reliability of assessment information, has enabled pupils to make improved progress and achieve better outcomes.

Leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and moved forward on the areas for improvement identified in the school's previous inspection report. You continue to focus on further increasing the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able pupils. You are aware that pupils with SEND also form a notable proportion of the total number of fixed-term exclusions. You have identified strategies to improve this.

Leaders have clear and high expectations that all curriculum areas should demonstrate similarly high levels of progress. You recognise that there continues to be some unevenness

between subjects. In particular, you are focusing on provision and outcomes in mathematics and science, which remain inconsistent.

Governors appreciate working with you and your team. They recognise and commend the team's leadership qualities and their transparency. They bring knowledge, commitment and skills that support the school's strategic planning. For example, the link attendance governor receives weekly reports that originally focused on persistent absence; now that this has fallen to below the national average, the focus has shifted to the attendance of pupils with SEND. Governors support the school's attendance strategy by being part of a panel which meets with parents to discuss attendance issues. This helps them to understand and support the strategic work of the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the progress of different groups of pupils, the areas for improvement and the effectiveness of school procedures and processes. This work is well documented in the minutes of governors' meetings.

On the day of the inspection, pupils were confident, eager and willing to talk with inspectors. External reviews agree that this is typical. In the pupil survey, the majority of pupils stated that they 'are encouraged to be independent' and 'are taught to take on responsibilities'. The new Year 8 'Community Cohesion' unit of work exemplifies this and actively promotes British values. Pupils reported that teachers provide them with helpful advice and guidance about keeping themselves safe outside school. Pupils spoke highly of the new lessons and assemblies on well-being, which gave them specific skills to deal with a variety of issues. A high proportion of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were supportive of the school and its actions and said that they would recommend the school to other parents.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding records are detailed and systems are robust. You have established a culture of safeguarding across the school. All staff are trained to an appropriate level and receive regular safeguarding updates. They are aware of their statutory responsibility to keep pupils safe and have undertaken online training. Staff carefully monitor any pupils causing concern and make appropriate and timely referrals.

You, your leaders and governors are rightly very proud of your inclusive ethos and the work that goes into supporting every pupil as and when they need it. For example, pupils may receive additional pastoral care, detailed pastoral support plans, which include a parental input, and/or 'Team around the Family' meetings. These actions centre on the needs of individual pupils. You explore all avenues, including discussions with the local authority's Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing Education (BACME) service. Information is then appropriately shared with staff to maximise the impact of the agreed actions.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to see how you and your leaders are working to improve the progress and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions of pupils with SEND. This was because, in 2018, the progress made by pupils with SEND was below the national average, and

although the overall proportion of fixed-term exclusions was below the national average, it was above average for pupils with SEND.

- Leaders have established a positive environment for learning, with strategies to increase staff awareness of the needs of pupils with SEND and raise their expectations. You have focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessments so that pupils with SEND receive the right balance of challenge and support. You have also provided additional support to individuals through a programme of mentoring. Evidence from pupils' work in their books and in lessons shows that these strategies are having some success, particularly where assessment is well used. However, some inconsistency in practice remains, which means that some pupils with SEND are not yet making the progress of which they are capable.
- You have worked with pupils, parents and the school's special educational needs coordinator to refine and personalise strategies to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions. The school is continuing to prioritise this work.
- Next, we evaluated the actions leaders have taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. This was because there had been a drop in mathematics outcomes in 2018. Our visits to classrooms revealed that mathematics teachers have sound subject knowledge. Teaching included activities that reinforced students' mathematical skills to reach their target grades; some pupils in Year 9 had made excellent progress and surpassed their targets.
- Observation of teaching and learning also showed that the mathematics faculty feedback policy was being inconsistently implemented, and there was some ineffective questioning. Overall, evidence from pupils' books and assessment information show that progress is not as high as last year. This is not true of the majority of other subjects, where progress has improved since 2018.
- We next looked at leaders' actions to raise achievement across the curriculum and, in particular, improve the effectiveness of middle leadership.
- Leaders have overseen a range of informative and helpful whole-school and departmental strategies and curriculum projects. These have provided teachers with the training and guidance they need to develop their skills and improve their teaching.
- Half-termly department reviews are focused on monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school improvement plan. They identify departmental strengths and actions to enable further improvements in the quality of teaching. Through this process, leaders have accurately and sensitively identified and begun to address underperformance. For example, you have identified which aspects of science provision need to improve further and have a clear plan on how to achieve this.
- Through careful and thoughtful succession planning, you have nurtured, developed and encouraged teachers to progress their careers and become middle leaders. Middle leaders demonstrated an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning when we jointly visited lessons. You continually plan and deliver training to improve and enhance their leadership skills and knowledge to ensure even greater consistency across the curriculum.
- Finally, we looked at how leaders have improved attendance, reduced persistent absence and ensured that all pupils go on to further education, employment or training.

- In 2018, overall attendance increased and it continues to improve in this academic year. You have successfully reduced persistent absenteeism and it is now below the national average, including for Year 11 and disadvantaged pupils. You have accurately identified the issues, and your approach of making attendance a whole-school responsibility has worked well.
- Weekly monitoring enables form tutors to hold timely and personalised conversations with pupils about their attendance and guide them to make positive decisions on attending school. You are aware of the current groups of pupils, such as Year 7 pupils who speak English as an additional language and Year 9 pupils with SEND, whose attendance needs continuing improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the consistency of middle leaders continues to improve
- pupils with SEND are supported to improve their attendance and outcomes
- progress and attainment in mathematics and science improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Hayley Follett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, the inspection team visited classrooms with senior leaders and looked at pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups. We met with you and other school leaders. We also met with the chair and other members of the governing body. We spoke with groups of pupils during breaktimes and lunchtimes and observed their behaviour around the school. The responses of 87 parents to the Parent View survey were analysed. We looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' achievement, analysis of teaching and learning, destination data, safeguarding records and policies. I undertook a review of the school's website.