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Mr Russell Mitchell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Mitchell

Short inspection of Glebelands School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2017 with Nick Watkiss, 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 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.

Although you are in your first term as the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents and governors recognise that the school has already benefited from your dynamic leadership and positivity. You are well supported by the leadership team. Leaders, including governors, are ambitious to achieve the very best for all pupils. Leaders recognise that better communication with parents and widening opportunities for pupils to develop emotionally, socially and academically are already having an impact on the school's improvement journey.

Inspectors agree with your assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The new leadership team has settled well. The team is supported by an experienced headteacher from another school in the area. Leaders are keen to maintain the link with the local federation of schools and colleges which provides some creative and exciting courses for pupils embarking on GCSE courses.

Leaders have identified the need to support pupils in becoming more independent and responsible for their own learning. Teachers have concentrated on improving achievement for all pupils by insisting on high standards of behaviour both within lessons and around the school. Inspectors saw excellent behaviour from all age groups throughout the day. Lessons are calm and purposeful and good relationships are evident. Pupils were very complimentary about the way teachers have worked on

improving pupils' responsibility for their own learning. They like the fact that reports to their parents include improvements in learning behaviours as well as academic progress.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to reduce any teaching that requires improvement, thereby raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. In addition, inspectors asked leaders to focus on providing support to the small number of middle leaders who were not fulfilling their responsibilities, so that they could match the performance of the best in the school.

The leadership team and governors have taken effective action to address those recommendations. A deputy headteacher now has responsibility for overseeing improvements to teaching and learning. Leaders have established a weekly programme of developmental activities for staff. They have set up professional development programmes to support staff at different stages of their careers, including the middle leaders. Staff feel well supported by the leadership team. One respondent to the staff survey noted, 'Leaders take workload into account when implementing policies and procedures so as to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on staff.' Middle leaders feel that better procedures are in place now. Monitoring is more evaluative and helps them to move standards up. Leaders model high expectations and ensure that middle leaders have regular opportunities to share improvements and good ideas.

Leaders know there is more work to be done, even though attendance has improved and persistent absence has reduced. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and some disadvantaged pupils do not attend as regularly as their peers. Leaders recognise that interventions need to be tailored to match the needs of these pupils. Some individuals have made excellent progress when the right support was provided early enough. Leaders are very visible at the start and end of the school day, ensuring good punctuality and reinforcing expectations of behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

The headteacher takes a strong lead in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective for all pupils, including the most vulnerable. Leaders have regular training and a small team of trained safeguarding staff ensure that there is a widespread culture of safeguarding across the school. Governors check that policies are up to date and they recently commissioned an audit to further develop best practice in this aspect of the school's work.

Pupils feel safe. They know how to stay safe and assess any risks that may face them, including online. Pupils said that bullying was rare and that staff respond to any concerns. The parents who replied to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe in school and 95% of the respondents would recommend this school to another parent.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of the use of extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities; pupils' progress in all subjects across the curriculum; pupils' attendance; pupils' attainment in all subjects and the choices they have at option time; and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Over time, leaders have ensured that pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make sustained progress and are catching up with their peers. Leaders use the additional funding to target the pupils who need it most. The special educational needs coordinator has strengthened systems and procedures and has an in-depth knowledge of individual pupils and good contact with parents. Inspectors looked at books during visits to lessons and could see no difference between the quality of work of disadvantaged pupils and others in the majority of subjects. Pupils enjoy most of their lessons and feel they are challenged to do their best.
- Pupils made strong progress in the GCSE examinations of 2017 in a number of subjects which have usually performed well (such as in humanities subjects, for example). Leaders were not as happy with the outcomes in a small number of other subjects but they have already planned improvements for this year. Teachers' predictions for the current Year 11 look promising. The leadership team is determined to provide earlier support in the lower school. Leaders set stretching targets for all pupils. They have introduced a new system of assessment in the lower school and they track patterns of achievement for all pupils. Teachers are getting to grips with the school's new assessment system. Leaders know they will need to continue to refine and adapt it where necessary. There are a small number of subjects where improvement needs to be more rapid and leaders are already working with teachers to achieve this.
- Heads of achievement track attendance in each year group. They are now supported by a home-link worker who provides extra support for parents. They have reduced persistent absence and leaders gave some impressive examples of individual successes in improving poor attendance. Staff know the pupils really well. However, leaders are clear that further interventions are needed to improve the attendance and reduce persistent absence for some disadvantaged pupils and for some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- In all year groups, the pupils have a good range of subjects which they enjoy with an emphasis on solid foundations in English, mathematics and science. Leaders have maintained a wide choice of GCSE options to meet pupils' interests. This is not always easy in a smaller-than-average school. Leaders have engaged with the local federation of schools and colleges to provide some subjects off-site for individual pupils. The staff offer a variety of clubs, trips and visits which are well attended. For example, some pupils have just returned from a trip to Iceland. There are also 'focus days' which give extra time to the arts and technology or for outside speakers. Pupils rate highly 'Learning 4 Life' lessons. The leadership team and middle leaders have improved the setting of homework. Parents feel that the right amount of homework is set and pupils feel it challenges them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance continues to improve and persistent absence is further reduced for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
- leaders further refine the new assessment system in the lower school to ensure that progress is closely tracked for all groups of pupils to allow timely support where necessary and improve pupils' progress overall.

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

Yours sincerely

Beverley Murtagh
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, members of the leadership team, and a group of middle leaders. A team inspector spoke to the director of the local federation of schools and colleges. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with the school's improvement partner by telephone. Inspectors observed learning in 26 parts of lessons across 12 departments, accompanied by senior leaders. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils from Years 8 and 10. Inspectors took into account the 103 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 42 responses to a confidential staff survey and 32 pupil questionnaires, provided by Ofsted. Inspectors analysed a wide range of documentation, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of governors' meetings, the single central record of recruitment checks, safeguarding information and other policies. Inspectors reviewed information about pupils' attainment and progress and reports about attendance and behaviour.