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Mr Iain Veitch
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Veitch

Short inspection of Park View School

Following my visit with Fiona Manuel, Her Majesty's Inspector, to the academy on 10 November 2015, 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 academy was judged to be good in December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Leaders of the academy, including governors, manage to combine a strong sense of care and nurture with high academic ambition for all pupils. The climate around the academy is calm and business-like, as pupils work hard and apply themselves diligently. Strong teaching across the curriculum is ensuring that pupils achieve well on different courses and from different starting points. They concentrate well in lessons and cooperate effectively with one another. The academy provides them with high-quality information, advice and guidance about future study and career options. As a result, pupils have a clarity of purpose and strive hard to achieve their ambitions.

The vast majority of parents that responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire hold very positive views about the academy. The same positive views were shared by members of staff and pupils who completed a separate online survey. Pupils were clear the academy provides a safe and happy place in which to learn.

Members of the governing body are not complacent and are determined to improve outcomes further so that the academy becomes outstanding. They have fostered links with other strong schools and ensure that there is regular external scrutiny and challenge. Leaders, including heads of department, are regularly held directly

accountable by governors. The headteacher and external consultants provide governors with detailed reports and consequently governors know the academy's strengths and weaknesses well.

Since the last inspection, leaders have made a number of changes to the curriculum. At Key Stage 4, there is a strong emphasis on academic rigour. However, in response to a drop in standards in 2014, when a number of Year 11 pupils struggled to make good progress, the curriculum has been rebalanced to include vocational pathways that better meet some pupils' needs and interests. Outcomes on these courses were strong in 2015. In addition, outcomes for the majority of pupils who followed academic pathways improved across many subjects last year. The academy's most recent assessment information suggests outcomes for current pupils are on course to rise further in 2016.

In response to the previous inspection findings, the curriculum in the sixth form has also been broadened to include strong academic and vocational options. Pupils receive good teaching and benefit from helpful work experience opportunities and careers guidance. This helps the vast majority of pupils to secure university places or apprenticeships.

Leaders have acted on recommendations from the previous inspection to ensure that the quality of teaching in the academy continues to be strong. Typically, teaching builds effectively on prior learning and moves at a brisk pace. Regular marking and feedback from teachers makes a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' learning. Most of the teachers we observed asked probing and thought-provoking questions that further developed pupils' understanding. Some teaching in Year 7 and 8 lacks the level of rigour typically found in the school and some pupils get away with untidy presentation.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The academy has clear policies in place to guide staff in the actions they should take to safeguard pupils. Thorough checks are made on all adults that work in the academy and all staff receive up-to-date training in child protection. For vulnerable pupils, the academy has developed a 'team around the child' approach, which ensures that there is good communication with outside agencies. The headteacher has led work to ensure that pupils who suffer from mental stress or anxiety receive high-quality professional support.

The curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to learn about potential risks. For example, we observed pupils discussing sensitive issues about radicalisation and gender confidently and maturely in lessons. Pastoral staff take bullying seriously and work closely with pupils and parents to address bullying on the rare occasions when it occurs. Nevertheless, leaders recognise they need to ensure that the academy's anti-bullying strategies continue to have a high profile and that incidents of perceived bullying are minimised.

Inspection findings

- Leaders set high expectations of staff and pupils. They create a warm and supportive climate in which pupils thrive and make good progress in the lower and upper schools and in the sixth form.
- The academy has sustained good teaching since the last inspection. In departments where there were weaknesses, leaders have provided effective challenge and support that has resulted in improvements. For example, in mathematics, a new head of department has raised expectations and is developing the quality of teaching and learning well. Effective mentoring is used to tackle any inconsistencies in practice. The rigorous checks made by senior leaders ensure that they have a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, over time, across the academy.
- The curriculum has developed to provide a variety of pathways that support pupils' different abilities and interests. There are clear academic and vocational pathways across Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, underpinned with good-quality, impartial careers guidance.
- Leaders track the progress of pupils in all year groups carefully, to identify any underperformance. Governors use this information to challenge leaders and swift action is taken to support teaching where slower progress is identified. For example, the governors are not content with the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the academy, despite the gap being smaller than that seen nationally. Consequently, leaders have good arrangements in place to monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils. However, more should be done to check on the attainment and progress of the sizable group of looked after children, so that their learning needs are fully met.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they improve the rigour of some teaching in Years 7 and 8 so that pupils make rapid gains and are well prepared for courses at the upper school
- they work closely with pupils so that they fully understand the difference between bullying and friendship issues
- they track and report more clearly on the achievement of looked after children in the academy, to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the visit, we held meetings with you and other senior leaders, the head of sixth form, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors and a group of pupils. Together with senior leaders, we visited lessons at both the North Lodge and Upper School sites, including lessons taught in the sixth form. During these observations, we spoke to pupils and sampled their books and folders. We also observed pupils' behaviour and the climate around both school sites at social times. We scrutinised a range of documentation including your self-evaluation and plans for improvement, minutes of governing body meetings and checks made on the quality of teaching. We also took account of attendance data and assessment information on the progress of pupils currently at the academy. In addition, we considered the 96 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the responses to a staff and pupil questionnaire and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.