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Mr Alan Chapman  
Headteacher  
Catcote Academy  
Catcote Road  
Hartlepool  
TS25 4EZ

Dear Mr Chapman

### **Short inspection of Catcote Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 2016 with Fiona Dixon, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your high expectations and ambition for every pupil to have a 'great future' are at the heart of the school's work. The impact of your principled leadership and strong values can be seen everywhere in the school. You and your senior leaders are tireless in your pursuit of the best life chances for your pupils.

Inspectors identified two areas for improvement at the predecessor school's last inspection. First, to improve the attendance and progress of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Second, to ensure that additional adults are deployed well and have the knowledge and skills to develop pupils' learning. You have tackled these areas for improvement swiftly and to good effect. The impact of your actions is clearly evident in pupils' improved attendance and faster progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form.

You and your senior leaders have secured the strong support of pupils, parents and staff. Year 11 pupils and sixth form learners have huge pride in the school, parents are overwhelmingly positive and supportive, and staff share your drive and determination to be the best they can be. All have 'signed up' to your exciting and ambitious vision for the future.

Governors share your high expectations and ambitions for the future and are

increasingly effective. They demand detailed information and reports from you and do not hold back when they question and challenge you and other leaders. In doing so, they hold the school's leaders robustly to account.

The actions taken by you, senior leaders and governors demonstrate strong capacity to secure further improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Pupils and learners say that they feel well supported and safe. They trust you and the other adults who care for them, and know that you listen and help them to 'sort things out'.

You know your pupils, their families and the community you serve well. You are alert to the things that make young people vulnerable, and are quick to act when pupils or learners need additional help. Case studies illustrate how you work closely with other professionals and services. Crucially, they show that you have taken prompt and decisive action when this has been needed.

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and their readiness for the next stage of their lives, are at the heart of the school's work. You have 'moved mountains' to create new pathways into training and employment for your pupils. As a consequence, the curriculum includes an increasingly rich range of vocational courses, work placements and supported internships. Sixth form learners talked with confidence and pride about this aspect of the 16 to 19 study programmes.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have improved the aspects of teaching that were weaker at the time of the predecessor school's last inspection. The better impact of additional adults on pupils' learning and progress is clear. In a Key Stage 4 science lesson, for example, additional adults questioned and prompted pupils skilfully. This helped the pupils to consolidate their understanding of chemical reactions. More-able pupils deepened their understanding because they were challenged to explain their scientific ideas.
- Pupils make fastest progress when teachers pitch work at the right level, explain concepts clearly and tackle misconceptions in pupils' work quickly. For example, in a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher's clear explanation and effective questioning helped pupils learn how to place data in a Venn diagram accurately. Misconceptions in previous work were tackled well and pupils improved their knowledge and understanding and gained in confidence. Occasionally, teachers do not identify what pupils need to do to improve the standard of their work and, as a result, pupils do not know how to take that important next step.
- Attendance has improved strongly over the last two years and is now

broadly in line with the national average for secondary schools. The school's expectations of pupils are much higher now, and good or improved attendance is systematically rewarded and celebrated. Pupils who need additional help to improve their attendance are identified quickly and supported effectively.

- There has been a sustained upward trend in rates of progress and pupils' attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4. This is also the case in the sixth form where learners achieve higher-level qualifications and learn how to use and apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in Years 7 to 11. Although rates of progress in English and mathematics have improved, pupils make faster progress in mathematics than in English at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Considerable work has been done to improve outcomes for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. There has been a marked improvement in levels of attendance and rates of progress for this group of pupils. This area of improvement from the predecessor school's last inspection has been tackled well.
- In 2015, all Year 11 pupils and Year 14 learners moved successfully on to further education or training. Pupils say they feel well supported and 'ready for the next step'. This aspect of the school's work is highly effective. Pupils systematically acquire and develop the skills and qualities they need to be as independent and 'work-ready' as possible. As a consequence, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning and lives.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and have enormous pride in themselves and their school. Parents share this pride. One parent said: 'The school challenges my son's learning and I can clearly see what he has achieved. He feels valued.' Leaders have created a strong and cohesive learning community where pupils feel important, valued and respected.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve the standard of their work
- rates of progress in English improve and match those in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Hartlepool Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you and other senior leaders, Year 11 pupils, sixth form learners and representatives from the governing body and School Trust. Inspectors visited lessons with senior leaders, looked at the work in pupils' books and folders and talked to them about their learning. Inspectors considered the survey results from 'Parent View' and examined a range of documents including: information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and the school's survey of stakeholder views.