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Dennis Kirwan
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Dear Mr Kirwan

Short inspection of Ormiston Bushfield Academy

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 2016 with Matthew Rayner HMI, 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 school was judged to be good in May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

- Since your appointment you have provided very clear direction for the school. Your appointment of senior leaders to support your work has contributed to the school's improvement.
- Pupils achieve well in many subjects. They enter the school in Year 7 with standards in English and mathematics that are well below the national average. Pupils make good progress and leave with standards in both English and mathematics that are in line with the national level.
- The quality of teaching has improved in recent years. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and contribute substantially to the calm and productive learning environment.
- Pupils identified as being at most risk of underachievement are exceptionally well catered for at the school. A nurture group to support Year 7 pupils is very effective in ensuring that those pupils who find the transition between primary and secondary school difficult are given help to develop the skills that they need to succeed in the future. These pupils are making very good progress. Similarly, pupils at risk of exclusion or who find mainstream lessons challenging are taught in a special unit. This part of the school is very well resourced and provides pupils with an opportunity to maintain their learning.

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Transition times between lessons are swift and well managed so that lessons get off to a prompt start. Pupils told inspectors that their lessons are rarely disrupted and, when this does occur, teachers act quickly.
- Lunch and breaktimes are orderly and pleasant social occasions when many pupils chat and enjoy one another's company.
- Leadership of subjects is improving and is having a positive impact on many areas of the school's work. Subject leaders know their departments well and many are looking for new ways of motivating and inspiring pupils. A recent project to promote the learning of times tables was very successful and was popular with both pupils and staff.
- The leader of the sixth form, appointed in September 2015, has made a clear impact in a short period of time. This has involved a review of the suitability of all courses offered, alongside much improved guidance and advice for pupils preparing to enter the sixth form.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum has changed recently to reflect the amendments to the National Curriculum. New assessment systems have been introduced and are currently embedding. Work has started to ensure that assessment information from primary schools is more effectively used to support pupils' transition.
- The academic curriculum is well supported by a broad range of after-school clubs and sporting opportunities. These are popular with many pupils and uptake rates are rising.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others have narrowed in English and are now on a par with the gaps in mathematics. These gaps are smaller than those found nationally and school assessment information indicates that they are set to narrow further in 2016.
- Girls make significantly more progress than boys. In 2015 this was especially the case in English, science and the humanities. A scrutiny of pupils' work across a range of subjects showed that middle-ability and less-able boys frequently produce work that is untidy and poorly presented. This is not the case for the majority of work produced by girls in similar classes.
- Leaders are aware of the gender gap and it is a priority for improvement across the school. Interventions and support programmes are in place but leaders are not yet fully clear about the impact that they are having.
- Almost 150 parents responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire. The great majority of responses were positive. The pupils' responses to their questionnaire were similarly positive, with almost all pupils stating that they enjoy learning.
- Governors provide leaders with effective support and challenge. Their individual skills and experience have been matched to specific areas and leaders and this has improved their broader understanding of the school's work.
- The school receives effective support from the Ormiston Academy Trust. A Trust representative knows the school well and is providing valuable consultancy and leadership support.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Leaders make sure that systems and procedures meet statutory requirements. Staff are well trained and understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Employment records are well organised.
- Those pupils who are the most vulnerable are well supported by a pastoral team who know them as individuals. Pupils report that there is an adult at the school that they can talk to if something is worrying them.

Inspection findings

- The school's assessment information systems are comprehensive and well organised. They allow leaders and teachers to track pupils well as they progress through the school. Assessments are moderated and teachers have a good track record of accurately predicting examination outcomes in the majority of subjects. In the very small number of subjects where predictions have been inaccurate, support has been provided to improve matters.
- Leaders have a similarly rigorous approach to the evaluation of the quality of teaching. A range of strategies are in place to ensure that leaders at all levels are monitoring teaching regularly. The scrutiny of pupils' work, to assess learning over time, is a key part of this strategy, and gives leaders a clear insight into where the best practice is and where more support is needed.
- The rate of pupils' progress is continuing to improve. Pupils currently in Year 11 entered the school in Year 7 with exceptionally low levels of attainment in English and mathematics. They are currently on track to reach standards that are broadly in line with the national average.
- In 2015 pupils' outcomes in science and geography were too low. In science, pupils had taken some examinations at the end of Year 10 and too many had done poorly. This policy was changed very soon after the appointment of the new Principal. This group of pupils were encouraged to retake their examinations in the summer of 2015 and the pass rate rose from 17% to 70%. This is not reflected in the published data as only the first entry is taken into account. Staffing changes in the geography department accounted for the low outcomes. New appointments have been made and a scrutiny of pupils' work in this subject indicates that much stronger progress is being made.
- Learners enter the sixth form with GCSE and Level 2 qualifications that are lower than the national average. They made broadly average progress in almost all AS- and A-level subjects in 2015 and many secured university places. Rates of progress in vocational subjects were similar to those in academic courses, with the exception of BTEC speech and drama, where outcomes are very high.
- Pupils are now provided with much broader guidance as they consider their options beyond Year 11. Pupils commented that the guidance they received in the past was too narrow and some learners in the sixth form have started courses that they later wanted to change. This was particularly the case for students who took A-level mathematics in Year 12 but did not

continue the course in Year 13. The guidance that pupils now receive includes a discussion about their aspirations at aged 18+ so that their needs are much more closely matched to the courses they choose.

- Additional funding to support Year 7 pupils is very well spent. A nurture group provides pupils with the opportunity to gain key basic skills in literacy and numeracy so that when they integrate fully into mainstream lessons they are on an equal footing with their peers and are much less likely to underachieve. The progress that these pupils make is very carefully tracked and many are making swift gains in reading and mathematics. These pupils are also learning 'how to learn' more effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported by a range of interventions that have contributed to the attainment gaps between these pupils and others narrowing in the recent past. The precise monitoring of the impact of individual interventions is at an early stage of development. As a result, leaders are not yet absolutely clear about which of them is contributing the most, and if any are having little impact.
- The gap between the attainment of boys and girls is a focus of a great deal of the school's work. While progress is being made, especially for the more-able boys who are responding very well to an increased level of challenge, middle-ability and less-able boys continue to progress at a slower rate than their female counterparts. This is evident in many boys' work, where the level of care and pride taken is lower than that of the girls in the same class.
- Rates of attendance are in line with the national levels. Pupils are punctual and get to their next lessons on time. Little time is wasted in transition between lessons.
- The school promotes British values very clearly. Displays remind pupils about their role in ensuring that tolerance, respect for the law and democracy are maintained. Pupils are listened to and their views are taken into account.
- The proportions of pupils who are excluded are lower than the national average for secondary schools. Pupils at risk of exclusion are supported within a structured group, where their curriculum is taught by specialist teachers alongside some of the school's most effective subject teachers.
- Governors have restructured their work in order to make the best use of a broad range of experience, expertise and skills. Each governor is now partnered with a senior leader and they work together to ensure that governors understand and contribute to the development of that specific area. The sum of this information is presented to the full governing body, where leaders are held to account for the quality of their work. As a result, governors' capacity to both support and challenge has improved since the previous inspection.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- boys' work is presented with more care and pride so that its presentation is similar to that of girls

- the impact of interventions and support programmes designed to promote better outcomes for boys and disadvantaged pupils is more closely tracked.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with the Principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, three governors, a representative of Ormiston Academy Trust and pupils to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. The school's self-evaluation documentation was evaluated and discussed. Inspectors visited lessons, observed teaching and looked at pupils' work in several subjects. Some of these visits to lessons were with senior leaders. The school's improvement plans, its safeguarding records, attendance and exclusion data and assessment information were also evaluated by inspectors.