

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



18 May 2016

Mrs Janet Cullen  
Principal  
Lea Valley High School  
Bullsmoor Lane  
Enfield  
EN3 6TW

Dear Mrs Cullen

### **Short inspection of Lea Valley High School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 2016 with Susan Maguire, 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 July 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders and governors are pragmatic about the present challenges that the school faces but show great determination to improve provision and outcomes. Your unwaveringly high aspirations for pupils drive the school's improvement plans. Leaders continue to focus sharply on pupils' welfare and achievement. Consequently, pupils feel safe and happy at your school and outcomes are improving.

Your candid evaluation of the school's performance last year is accurate. You recognise a dip in performance in 2015, particularly in mathematics. Outcomes were better in modern foreign languages, in line with expectations in English and improved in science. You and your leadership team have responded rapidly to last year's results. You monitor pupil performance robustly across all subjects and work with teachers and support staff to give appropriate support where it is needed. You have sought to improve staffing consistency and have adjusted the curriculum to best meet the needs of individual pupils. Moreover, you have invested resources in the mathematics department. The school's new assessment system draws on reliable, moderated assessment results and enables leaders and teachers to analyse pupils' performance and implement support more effectively. As a result, you are able to demonstrate that pupils' progress overall and in mathematics is stronger this year. Notably, the most-able pupils are making better progress overall and particularly in English and mathematics. The majority of pupils in Year 11 have already achieved a good grade in English GCSE and they are now better able to access further English literature studies.

Your assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils, who comprise the majority of the pupil population, are making progress that is increasingly in line with their peers. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others is closing. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are also making better progress. This is as a result of the skilled and dedicated support provided by your inclusion team. There is a strong focus on each individual's needs from the moment a pupil knows that they are joining the school. Those who join the school with low reading ages are comprehensively assessed on entry; staff then establish a bespoke programme of literacy support. This reflects the whole-school drive towards improving literacy for all groups of pupils. However, there is still work to do to ensure that White British boys make progress that is as good as or better than their peers. Leaders are supporting this group by drawing on effective strategies spearheaded by the school's inclusion team.

Staff share leaders' vision and support the whole-school ethos, underpinned by the 'Lea Valley Standard'. Pupils and parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys were positive about the actions that leaders have taken to make improvements to the school. They spoke highly of the support and attention paid to individuals, particularly when joining the school. Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attitudes to education and encourage them to aim high are paying off. Attendance has improved across the school, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities.

Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is accurate and informs your support for individual staff. Teachers use the school's clear guidance to inform their planning and talk to pupils helpfully about their progress. Consequently, pupils' learning is deepening in many lessons.

Positive behaviour in most lessons enables pupils to engage effectively with their learning. However, sometimes incidents of poor behaviour occur as a result of pupils not being effectively challenged. You have recognised this, and ensured that coaching and training for staff focuses on these key areas. Inspectors recognised the impact of this training during the inspection. Teachers encouraged pupils to develop their ideas through challenging questioning, and expectations were consistently high.

Governors are keenly aware of the strengths and challenges facing the school. They are highly aspirational for pupils' all-round development. They hold you and your leadership team to account robustly, for example by thorough analysis of performance information. The performance of all staff is closely linked to pupils' outcomes.

Students on 16 to 19 study programmes follow appropriate courses and feel supported when choosing these. The school's 16 to 19 study programme guidance is supported by a range of careers advice and guidance that includes an information evening, close support for university applications and a careers event in which governors play a part.

Leaders' commitment to supporting individuals and raising aspirations is a common thread running through the school. Pupils spoke with pride to inspectors about their participation in whole-school events, such as an anti-bullying campaign. Pupils value their role in the school parliament. Sixth form students offer well-regarded peer mentoring and support for younger members of the school community.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school has clear and effective arrangements for safeguarding. Recruitment checks made on staff are precisely recorded on the single central register, and you and the chair of governors check that this is accurately maintained. Leaders and governors are assertive in their actions to ensure that everything possible is done to keep pupils safe at school. Your daily meetings with the designated safeguarding lead ensure that you are fully aware of any issues and can respond rapidly to concerns. You and your leadership team work hard to ensure that pupils are supported in order to reduce risk, responding quickly to instances where a child may be missing from education, for example.

Leaders' understanding of local and national issues, including gang culture, knife crime and the 'Prevent' duty, is strong and actions to ensure pupils' welfare are effective. For example, all staff receive regular safeguarding training, which has been enhanced by specific training for middle and senior leaders on counter-radicalisation. Pupils spoke of the opportunities they have received to explore welfare issues through assemblies and the tutorial curriculum on topics such as e-safety and sex and relationship education. The school works effectively with the local authority, police and healthcare services to help safeguard pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have undertaken a process of continuous review of the school's performance since the last inspection. As a result, leaders' understanding of the school's strengths, and your actions to address areas for continued development, are astute and effective. As a national leader of education you are drawing on your experience to plan sustainable actions with lasting impact. These include reviewing the curriculum offered to pupils in Years 7 to 11 to better enable them to access subsequent education, training or employment.
- You and your leadership team have ensured that arrangements for keeping children safe are robust and precisely followed. Whilst there is no explicit reference to the most recent guidance, your policy for safeguarding and child protection is thorough and is signed by all staff. The school's culture for promoting pupils' welfare is strong.
- Your focus upon improving standards recognises weaker pupils' outcomes in 2015. Actions to address the dip in performance in mathematics has resulted in markedly improved progress for all pupils this year. In humanities, you are focusing on strengthening the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is accurate. The new assessment system is effective and teachers are using it

well to plan lessons that closely match pupils' starting points. Where teaching is less strong, leaders provide support.

- The provision of support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability and the work of the school's inclusion team is very strong. Staff know, understand and respond to the needs of pupils with care and attention, so that pupils feel well looked after and supported in their learning. Prompt and effective action is taken to improve the outcomes for and attendance of pupils in receipt of special educational needs support.
- Part of the inclusion team's work includes supporting disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils who join the school with little spoken English receive separate timetabled English language lessons prior to being integrated into the mainstream. Expertise in the speech and language resourced provision enhances the language skills of lower ability pupils. As a result pupils are making better progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve particularly well.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the most able are improving. The school's current assessment information indicates that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing quickly and significantly. The most able are performing well, and making good progress from their starting points. This is as a result of challenging and carefully planned activities.
- The school's decision to offer GCSE options that lead to pupils gaining the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) reflect the school's commitment to raising pupils' aspirations. Leaders consider this decision to have negatively influenced humanities GCSE outcomes in 2015. However, leaders recognise that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment must support consistent outcomes across all subjects.
- Students on 16 to 19 study programmes make sound progress overall. On work-related courses progress is more rapid from relatively low starting points. Students work hard and are supported by teachers to achieve grades that enable them to access higher education and work-related training when they leave.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development is embedded in the school curriculum through lessons, assemblies and the life skills programme. Pupils told inspectors about their role in a recent whole-school campaign, which included raising awareness of issues around bullying through the distribution of armbands and production of a video. A recent debate on European Union membership typifies the school's desire to help pupils to engage with topical aspects of life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour normally meets leaders' high expectations, demonstrating respect for staff and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils usually display good manners and respect to one another, staff and the environment. Where this is not the case, leaders act swiftly in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Leaders understand that the local context can influence rare incidents of very poor behaviour but do not admit this as an excuse for such behaviour.
- Leaders carefully monitor attendance and work closely with pupils and their families to reduce persistent absence. Consequently, persistent absence has

halved over three years and reduced further this year. Attendance has improved this year, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The attendance of pupils in receipt of special educational needs support has improved but less rapidly.

- Governors' strategic vision is clear. Their lofty ambitions are rooted in a realistic understanding of the school. They support leaders' plans and challenge them to show the impact of their work. Following the dip in 2015 GCSE results, governors rightly sought explanations as to why it occurred and sharply scrutinised leaders' plans for improvement. A governor skills audit has improved governors' capacity to support the school's improvement and to develop their collective expertise.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' outcomes are consistently high across all subjects and for all groups, particularly in humanities and for White British boys
- attendance continues to improve for all groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Tiplin

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. They also met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and the school's local authority school improvement partner. Discussions were held with pupils, both formally and informally.

Inspectors visited a number of lessons jointly with members of your senior leadership team and the special educational needs and inclusion team. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, assessment information, the school's evaluation of its own performance and development planning. Pupils' work was scrutinised. Records about keeping pupils safe were evaluated.