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Mrs Yvonne Barry
Headteacher
Kingsmead School
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Dear Mrs Barry

Short inspection of Kingsmead School

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 2016 with Yvonne Chisholm, 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

There was a drop in GCSE results in 2015 and in mathematics and English in particular, pupils did not make the progress that they should have and their attainment was too low. You and your senior leaders were quick to respond and put strategies into place based upon a thorough analysis of those poor results. Your evaluation of the school's performance and development planning reflect this work, with pupils' progress now reflecting your high expectations.

With your senior leaders, you have worked to address the areas for improvement identified at your last inspection. This work has been successful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. More effective assessment practice is accelerating pupils' progress by identifying underperformance and helping teachers to respond through lesson-based and extra-curricular interventions. These improvements underpin your work to address last year's disappointing results.

The sixth form continues to be an area of strength in the school. Students' outcomes in 16 to 19 study programmes are consistently in line with those of their peers nationally and students' progress is significantly better than average. The curriculum is broad and includes work-related courses as part of a foundation offer in Year 12 for students seeking apprenticeship opportunities or to develop skills for A-level study.

Current assessment information indicates that the trend of strong performance in the sixth form continues. Most of those who re-sat English Language in Year 12 in the autumn passed, a marked improvement on their summer results.

Your focus on vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is clear from the work staff do to support their particular needs. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate and recognise the lengths that teachers go to in order to help them to do their best, which is reflected in the feedback they receive on their work.

Pupils' behaviour and welfare are at the core of your improvement plans and those of governors. The extensive range of enrichment and personal development opportunities are underpinned by robust systems that manage behaviour and respond quickly to concerns if raised. Attendance is strong overall, supported by procedures that staff use effectively and that pupils respect. The inclusion department is effective in helping pupils access their learning where behaviour or another factor, such as speaking English as an additional language, might otherwise be a barrier. Pupils told inspectors about how the diversity within the pupil population is a strength, celebrating individualism, and that bullying in any form is rare.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your senior leaders and members of the governing body understand that their safeguarding duty extends beyond maintaining documentation. You ensure that all necessary checks are carried out on staff and that these are then carefully logged on the single central register. A culture is created where risks are reduced through open communication and collaboration. Governors and members of your staff receive regular safeguarding training, which is topped up by training on specific issues such as the 'Prevent' duty and counter-radicalisation. Pupils discussed the work that the school has done with them to help keep themselves safe. They referenced the school's strategies to deal with local gang and knife crime as being particularly effective. Parents and staff who responded to the Ofsted surveys agreed that the pupils are safe at this school.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance and plans for development are accurate. Leaders have been effective in their efforts to improve pupils' performance across the curriculum by continuing to focus upon improving the quality of teaching and learning. They have also developed an assessment system that pupils increasingly understand and that teachers use well to support their planning. Specific issues arising as a result of last year's GCSE results have become core features of your plans.

- Governors understand their role and provide appropriate challenge to leaders through the committee structure. They hold leaders to account for pupils' performance, but recognise that their scrutiny of the attendance of groups of pupils is weaker. Governors' contribution to pupils' personal development, through mock university interviews and via the attendance panel, helps them understand the school and its pupils.
- Teachers' use of the assessment system is effective in helping pupils understand how they are doing. Careful questioning which probes understanding and helpful feedback on work improve the rate of progress. Some confusion over targets within the new system is recognised as being an area for development to ensure that the system is consistently effective.
- Leaders' developments in mathematics and English to improve pupils' performance mean that projected outcomes for Year 11 are much better and pupils' progress is in line with expectations. Close monitoring of teachers' performance and scrutiny of assessment information that informs subsequent interventions are improving pupils' work and raising aspirations.
- Disadvantaged pupils' performance dipped in line with the overall underperformance at GCSE last year. The systems of support that are in place to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress this year are working, such that currently there is no difference in their performance when compared with that of their peers. Pupils with lower than expected literacy and numeracy skills benefit from additional support that allows them to catch up with their peers quickly, particularly for those who speak English as an additional language.
- The most able pupils are doing better than last year; however, their rate of progress is slower than that of their peers. The most able students in 16 to 19 study programmes also made less progress than their peers last year. Leaders recognise this trend and have plans in place to manage this. The assessment system already identifies the performance of specific groups and teachers use this information to inform their planning and any additional interventions. Where teachers do not consistently plan for the needs of the most able, their progress can be too slow or variable.
- Boys are making better progress this year; however, their outcomes continue to lag behind those of girls. Leaders' analysis of this issue has identified behaviour and lower aspirations to be key factors behind this trend and have implemented strategies to address it, particularly with White British and Turkish boys. The 'home learning intervention plans' and 'programme advance learning skills' build upon existing school programmes and are developing resilience among pupils, linking positive attitudes to academic performance.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by whole-school systems for tracking performance and attendance. Leaders set a high bar of expectation for all pupils. Consequently, the attendance of this group is improving and their progress is stronger.

- The curriculum is shaped to meet the demands of an increasingly aspirational pupil population. Pupils across year groups are provided with opportunities to stretch themselves, with the most able in Years 7 and 8 able to gain a qualification in Latin, and option subjects at GCSE being examined in Year 10 to make way for further study in Year 11. The curriculum is enriched by trips linked to subject areas and opportunities for pupils to participate in national competitions and events such as mock elections.
- Leaders' work to enhance pupils' personal development and to aim high is paying off, with more pupils staying on into the sixth form and more going on to study at university. Pupils told inspectors about the sense of community that exists within the school, which is reflected in the respect pupils show adults and one another.
- The school's ethos of inclusion is strongly reflected in the work done with vulnerable groups. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was weak last year but is now improving, particularly in Years 7 to 10. The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are closely monitored and are supported with their particular behavioural needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching and learning consistently support the most able pupils to make quicker progress and improve outcomes for boys
- the assessment system continues to develop in order to clearly link pupils' progress to their targets.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner 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, and senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body, the vice-chair and two other governors, and pupils both formally and informally. The views of parents and staff were considered via Ofsted's surveys.

Inspectors visited 19 lessons jointly with members from your senior leadership team. Pupils' work was evaluated. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, assessment and attendance information, and the school's evaluation of its own performance and development planning. Records about keeping pupils safe were scrutinised.