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Jonathan Gillard
Principal
Aylward Academy
Windmill Road
Enfield
London
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Dear Mr Gillard

Short inspection of Aylward Academy

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 2016 with Dennis Canty, 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 November 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 the previous inspection, you and your senior leaders have continued to make improvements that have had a positive impact on the progress pupils make. While you understand the context and challenges faced by many of your pupils, you have established a 'no-excuses' culture. All staff and governors have consistently high expectations for what young people can achieve. As a result, the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points, across a range of subjects. In particular, you have focused on improving teaching and learning in mathematics and science, identified as areas for improvement at the previous inspection. As a result, the progress pupils make in these subjects has improved year on year and is now above the national average.

The 16–19 study programmes have improved due to a restructure of leadership in the sixth form and an intensive focus on students' academic progress and emotional well-being. The sixth form offers a variety of level 2 and level 3 courses to meet the full range of academic needs. You have raised the entrance requirements for some courses and ensured that information provided to students is of the highest quality. Consequently, students now make better progress from their starting points. The majority go on to their chosen apprenticeships, employment or university courses.

You and your leadership team have identified a small group of White British pupils whose progress is not as good as that of others at the school. You have detailed and credible plans in place to accelerate their progress and meet their often complex needs. Actions to secure the progress of other groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, have had a substantial impact over time. As a result, these pupils make much better progress than pupils nationally.

Attainment overall has remained stubbornly low over time. Most pupils arrive in Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below that expected for their age and with extremely low literacy levels. The extensive and effective literacy programme in Years 7 and 8 ensures that pupils are taught appropriate skills to be able to access the wider curriculum. As a result, as pupils move through the school, their confidence grows and their progress quickens. While some still do not achieve GCSE qualifications with grades A* to C, the majority make better progress from their starting points than pupils nationally and achieve qualifications in line with their ability. You fully anticipate that this accelerated progress will result in more pupils this year achieving GCSE at grade C or above, including in English and mathematics.

Governors, staff and pupils believe that positive changes have occurred since the previous inspection, particularly around pupils' behaviour. Pupils are proud of their diverse school community, celebrate their differing cultures and faiths, and mix well together. Your attention to securing the emotional well-being and success of all your pupils through initiatives such as 'The Beehive' and 'Two Bridges' ensures that pupils feel part of a safe, orderly learning environment where progress is celebrated. You and your staff are committed to producing 'active citizens' who have the confidence to contribute effectively to life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Staff know the risks posed by the wider community and all have undergone relevant training. They understand the 'Prevent' duty and their role in preventing radicalisation and extremism. Staff are equally aware of issues to do with gang involvement, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and mental health, which has been a priority this year. They are clear about the procedures for sharing concerns. Records of referrals are detailed and carefully kept. Actions, particularly by external agencies, are monitored. Checks on pupils' attendance are systematically tracked and follow-up work undertaken for any pupil deemed to be missing from education. Attendance overall has improved and is just below the national average. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with guidelines.

Pupils receive regular and high-quality information from staff at the school and external visitors on how they can keep themselves safe. A focus on pupils being safe online and appropriate internet security minimise the associated risks. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. The site is very secure and well kept. Pupils know whom to turn to should they have a concern. They believe that any instances of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with quickly by staff. The 'Beehive' provision

offers counselling, support and a place for quiet time. Pupils value this initiative highly.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have focused on ensuring that the curriculum is wide and varied to meet the needs of the diverse pupil population. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is significantly below the national average, and many pupils arrive at different times throughout the school year. Consequently, pupils are offered different curriculum pathways to meet their individual academic needs, particularly at key stage 4. A range of BTEC national diploma, GCSE and entry-level qualifications ensures that pupils have access to appropriate courses.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of subjects between key stage 2 and key stage 4. The proportion making good progress across eight subjects in 2015, the new Progress 8 measure, was higher than the national average. Information provided by the school, based on robust and accurate assessment, suggests that this will improve still further this year.
- Disadvantaged pupils make very good progress across a range of subjects. In 2015, they made better progress than other pupils nationally in both English and mathematics. Leaders carefully track the impact of pupil premium spending to ensure that this continues to be effective.
- The governing body is experienced and professional. Governors understand the school's strengths and stringently hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for tackling underperformance. They are proud of the school's achievements to date, work cohesively with school leaders and fully support plans for improvement.
- The Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) offers effective support to senior and middle leaders, including fortnightly visits and regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational needs, and those with an education, health and care plan make similar progress as other pupils. Their progress is carefully tracked and interventions are effective.
- The 'Two Bridges' provision is a separate unit within school and caters for up to 12 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. Pupils wear a different uniform and the curriculum is tailored to their needs. Most are successfully reintegrated back into mainstream lessons within six to 12 weeks. Supervision is high and pupils attend regularly.
- Progress in GCSE history and geography has not been strong over time due to a curriculum decision to teach the course in one year. This did not prove a successful strategy and was quickly changed.
- Middle leaders share senior leaders' vision for the school. They feel well supported to continue to deliver improved outcomes and systematically check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- School leaders are rightly proud of their success in developing new teachers' strengths and leadership skills. These teachers are complimentary about the support they receive to cultivate their skills.

- The most able pupils make better progress than this group nationally in English and mathematics. However, of the small number of disadvantaged most-able pupils, some do not make as much progress as this group nationally and their peers at the school. Leaders are targeting specific individuals to ensure that these pupils make better progress.
- Recent improvements in the sixth form are already having a marked impact on the provision. Four leaders now manage the 16–19 study programme. Attendance has improved. Better information, advice and guidance and more realistic entrance requirements to some courses mean that students' progress has improved. Much emphasis is given to providing work- and volunteering experiences for students. Success rates for university applications are high. More developments are planned to ensure that outcomes on all courses continue to rise.
- While attainment at GCSE at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been below the national average in recent years, it looks set to rise this year. School leaders have a proven track record of accurately predicting outcomes and, coupled with extensive moderation, have an accurate understanding of current assessment information.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- identified groups, including White British pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress
- recent changes to the sixth-form provision are monitored to check that all students make at least good progress on their chosen courses
- more pupils achieve GCSE grades in line with the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. They met with the chair of the governing body, a staff governor and a parent governor. They spoke to two representatives from AET. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress of pupils and the single central record. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the inspection. They visited lessons in mathematics, humanities and languages to gather evidence on particular strands of teaching, learning and assessment.