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Ms Zoe Morris
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Dear Ms Morris

Short inspection of Chorlton High School

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 2016 with Jonathan Smart, 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You, senior leaders and governors have maintained the good quality of education in the school since your predecessor school's previous inspection. You all share a very detailed and clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. Your meticulous evaluation of all aspects of the school's work has secured a very effective school development plan, which you review regularly with governors. You relentlessly monitor the school's progress against the challenging targets that the plan sets out for the school's improvement. Your multi-layered quality assurance systems hold leaders, at all levels, and staff to account for the quality of teaching and for pupils' progress. This has ensured that, after some dips in performance in 2015, the great majority of pupils now make good progress.

The trustees and governors of the CHS Learning Trust are highly committed to the school's success and take an active and strategic role in its development. Governors act as your critical friends, celebrating the school's successes and challenging you and your senior leaders in meetings. They insist on knowing the precise impact of your actions on pupils' progress. Governors take a particularly strong interest in the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They know exactly how the pupil premium funding is spent and how much work needs to be done in order that gaps between the attainment of these pupils and others nationally close quickly. The executive headteacher of the trust provides added capacity for the leadership and management of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are exemplary. Staff and governors take their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe very seriously. The buildings and grounds are secure. Regular audits and high-quality training ensure that the school's practice is that records are kept up to date, and checks made on adults working in the school are very rigorous.

The school makes sure that all staff and pupils understand the dangers of extremism, radicalisation and exploitation through the very strong personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. All staff are trained in the government's 'Prevent' duty, which aims to stop people being drawn into or supporting terrorism. Leaders are vigilant in their analysis of patterns in the absence of all pupil groups, especially those who are the most vulnerable, so that they can take rapid action if a pupil is missing education.

Pupils with whom we spoke during the inspection stated that they feel safe in and around the school, and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree. Pupils' enjoyment of all that the school provides is evident in the improved attendance rates, including those of persistent absentees, which are now above the national average.

Inspection findings

- You have established an ambitious culture for the school, which is also very supportive. This has improved teaching across a range of subjects in the school and accelerated the progress that pupils make.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a wide range of subjects and qualifications for pupils. The curriculum in this highly diverse school gives pupils a good understanding of British values so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- PSHE and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strengths of the school. They are carefully mapped across subjects so that pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect on how to be healthy and rounded members of their community. Pupils enjoy the wide variety of sports and clubs available to them during social times, ranging from football and cricket to steel bands and creative writing.
- We saw generally good behaviour during the inspection. However, pupils told us that sometimes a small amount of low-level disruption occurs when teachers do not follow the behaviour policy consistently. Permanent exclusions are rare, but temporary exclusions of pupils from school are relatively high; this reflects the school's 'zero tolerance' approach to any misbehaviour.
- Pupils are confident to speak with visiting adults. They are polite, mature, courteous and are rightly proud of their school. They have a strong understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic country and contribute to the community through charitable fund raising and membership of the school council.

- The small number of pupils for whom education away from school is the best option for a short time are well catered for in the local pupil referral unit. During pupils' time there, their attendance, behaviour and progress are checked and recorded regularly.
- In 2015, pupils made broadly similar progress in English to that in mathematics. Overall, their progress was broadly in line with national averages. You recognise that there was some variation between different groups and subjects.
- Girls and pupils of mixed background did not do as well as they should in English. The most able did not make the progress expected of them in either mathematics or English. Pupils did not make enough progress in humanities and languages. On the other hand, the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language, disadvantaged and low-ability pupils was significantly above average in mathematics, reflecting the good quality of the extra support you provide for these pupils.
- In English, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was broadly similar to that of other pupils nationally. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disability is just below the national average, representing good progress for these pupils.
- You and your senior leaders have responded promptly to the underperformance in some subjects in 2015, and current pupils in these subjects are now on track to make better progress. However, you are aware that there is more work to be done to ensure that the most able pupils are suitably challenged to reach the highest levels of which they are capable. For example, some teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas and experiences in discussions.
- Teachers are keen to provide pupils with the best possible teaching they can. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to develop their practice further. Teaching seen during the inspection and through pupils' work over time is consistently good.
- Strengths in teaching include the very positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers' skilled questioning leads to pupils' deep reflection on a range of social and moral as well as subject-specific concepts.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers give pupils more opportunities to contribute their ideas and experiences in classroom discussions
- the most able pupils are appropriately challenged in all their subjects
- the rates of exclusions reduce rapidly by ensuring teachers' consistency in complying with the school's behaviour policy.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, the chair of the CHS Learning Trust and of the local governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed teaching across the school, including observations made jointly with the deputy headteacher and another member of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their work and examined a sample of their written work. Inspectors considered a range of documentary evidence, including the school's information about the progress of pupils currently in the school and their behaviour and safety. Inspectors took account of the 108 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. It was not possible for staff or pupils to access the electronic questionnaires.