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Dear Miss Duncan

Short inspection of Northumberland Park Community School

Following my visit to the school on 19 October 2016 with David Plumeridge, 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You are determined to improve the life chances of pupils who attend Northumberland Park Community School. You insist that everything the school does enables pupils to flourish. The school is a welcoming and orderly environment in which pupils enjoy themselves and are challenged to do well. The school's 'Twelve Steps to Success' programme permeates the school and pupils find it motivating.

Your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. You have successfully tackled most of the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Senior leaders, governors and staff share your ambition for the pupils. You openly acknowledge where work is still to be done and have effective plans in place to ensure that this happens.

The school's GCSE results remain below the national average, though they are steadily improving. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do better than others nationally in the progress they make from their lower-than-average starting points. You continue to set ambitious targets for pupils' GCSE results. The quality of teachers' planning and feedback is now consistently good across all departments and teaching assistants work well to support pupils. Pupils now have many opportunities in different subjects to develop their writing skills, which have improved.

You have rightly identified the link between pupils' attendance and how well they do at school. The school now has responsive systems in place to tackle pupils' absence. Pupils' attendance is above the national average.

You recognise there is still more to be done to improve attendance and achievement for particular groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You agree that the school's planning is not detailed enough for this group of pupils. You are going to ensure that planning in this area matches the high standard of planning in other areas.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school now has up-to-date and clear policies which promote good safeguarding practice. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and recruitment procedures follow the latest statutory guidance. Staff prioritise the welfare and safety of pupils and are well trained. Pupils of all ages feel safe at school. They are very positive about the school's work to keep them safe and feel able to talk to staff if necessary. Leaders promote a culture of responsible behaviour throughout the school and pupils report that bullying is rare.

Leaders deal with any issues that arise swiftly and sensitively. Staff work closely with local authorities and other agencies to support families with complex needs and/or looked after children.

Inspection findings

- You demonstrate strong leadership. You, senior leaders and staff understand the needs of pupils very well. You are determined to ensure that the school does everything it can to enhance pupils' learning and well-being. You insist on clear and focused planning and recognise where this is not yet in place.
- You are aspirational for pupils and promote successful former pupils as role models for current pupils. Pupils report that this inspires them to succeed.
- The chair of governors and members of the newly constituted governing body challenge the leaders of the school to ensure further improvement. Governors visit the school regularly, speak to pupils and analyse the school's information. As a result, they know the school well and are able to fulfil their role effectively.
- GCSE results are improving. You rightly plan for further improvement so that pupils' results match the GCSE results of other pupils nationally.
- The quality of teaching has improved. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and all lessons have a 'challenge task'. Results in subjects where pupils were previously underperforming, for example history and geography, are improving because teachers are planning consistently well. Teachers focus specifically on what pupils need to do to make progress. However, at times pupils do not respond as expected to the improved feedback they are receiving.
- Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ask questions effectively to develop pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants also support pupils' ability to work on their own.

- Pupils' writing has improved. Pupils now have more opportunities to write in a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy reading and find the reading programme in key stage 3 motivational. Pupils of all abilities read well and are encouraged to read in lessons and tutor time.
- Leaders have adapted the school's curriculum to promote pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Pupils now start their GCSEs in Year 9 and more pupils are entered for a wider range of academic GCSE subjects. Pupils feel that the school supports them well in decisions about the next stage of their education. The most able pupils are encouraged to apply for scholarship programmes to independent schools and their successes are celebrated. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well structured, inclusive and informative. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are respectful of how people are different.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school site and in lessons is excellent. Leaders have implemented effective strategies which promote good behaviour and pupils' safety. Most staff feel supported by leaders in managing behaviour well. Staff are alert to potential safeguarding issues and report them to the appropriate person promptly. Staff on duty are highly visible around the school site.
- Pupils' attendance overall is tracked rigorously and absence is followed up swiftly. Attendance is above the national average. However, the analysis of attendance for particular groups is not sufficiently robust. Permanent exclusion rates were high in 2014 because of a specific incident. Permanent exclusion rates have now returned to below the national average.
- Leaders are in the process of improving provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes supporting pupils in class with teaching assistants rather than in separate groups outside classrooms. The school's assessment information indicates that the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. Leaders accept that the quality of the school's evaluation and planning in this area is not sufficiently detailed. While the school does not currently have a special educational needs coordinator, one has recently been appointed and is due to start at the school very soon.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's planning focuses on the achievement and/or the attendance of a group of pupils where either outcome is below that of other pupils nationally
- this planning must include strategies to improve the outcomes of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pupils are given opportunities to respond to feedback from teachers so that they improve their work and make more rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors agreed to prioritise the following areas with the headteacher at the start of the inspection:

- The school's GCSE results: is the difference between how well pupils do in their GCSEs compared to other pupils nationally reducing?
- The quality of teaching and learning: is the quality of teachers' planning and feedback of a consistently high standard across all subjects and is teaching challenging enough?
- Permanent exclusion rates: does the school's use of permanent exclusion continue to be well above the national average?
- Safeguarding practice: do the school's child protection and safeguarding policies and practices reflect the latest statutory guidance?
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities: do leaders plan effectively to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Inspectors carried out the following activities to explore the identified areas during the inspection:

- They attended an assembly and visited nine lessons across a range of subjects jointly with a school leader. They looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors toured the site at breaktime and during lessons.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- They spoke with pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who had recently left the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website, and reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and strategic development plans, safeguarding policy and procedures, and curriculum and assessment information. They also checked the school's single central record.
- They took account of 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 71 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.