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Dear Mr Ferguson

Short inspection of Isleworth and Syon School for Boys

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school. Since the previous inspection, you and the leadership team have worked effectively to further improve the standard of education provided for pupils. Staff are proud of the work they do. Building on the long-standing traditions of the school, staff support the development of 'courteous, respectful and calm' young men, reflecting the school's well-established values.

The school is a safe and ordered environment, and pupils continue to behave very well in lessons and during unstructured times. Pupils' positive attitudes support their learning in class, and they make good progress as a result. The strong commitment of staff to meet the needs of pupils is evident; governors are rightly proud of this aspect of the school's work. Pupils' personal development is a strength. In the sixth form, students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and are effective role models for younger pupils. For example, students contribute to the 'reading buddy' scheme for pupils in key stage 3.

Leaders have addressed the key areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. For example, the progress made over key stage 4 by pupils in Year 11 in 2016 was above average, particularly for those with low starting points and disadvantaged pupils. In the survey of pupils' views, most confirmed that they enjoy school. Pupils enjoy learning and feel suitably challenged by their teachers.

However, you rightly acknowledge that pupils' progress in English does not match that seen in mathematics and science. You have identified that this is a priority.

Leaders at all levels have contributed to the school's accurate self-evaluation and identified strengths, as well as areas for development. Leaders are ambitious and have set robust targets to drive improvements. For example, the current focus on personalising support plans was noted by students in the sixth form as having a tangible impact on their current progress.

You have worked in successful partnership with other local education providers in the community to develop shared sixth form provision. This has enabled you to continue to provide a broad offer for students, while ensuring that it is more cost effective. Links with other local schools provide useful development opportunities for the staff and enable teachers to share new ideas.

Pupils, parents and staff are supportive of the school's mission in the community. The school is a popular choice for families.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. You, together with your staff and governors, ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils is a priority. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. Staff follow the school's systems and processes carefully to support pupils' welfare.

Staff and governors are clear about their roles, and work effectively with parents and external agencies to safeguard pupils. Staff have received appropriate information and training informed by up-to-date guidance. Staff have a clear understanding of the local community and its specific challenges. Pupils reported that they feel safe in school. They say that school staff encourage them to be friendly and to show respect towards each other. Leaders are taking clear steps to ensure that the attendance of different groups of pupils is improving to match the national average.

Inspection findings

- School leaders acknowledge that the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below the national average, and that the number of fixed-term exclusions increased last year.
- Leaders are taking action to improve the attendance of different groups and this is proving successful; for example, in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders are aware that the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that for all pupils nationally.
- Current information provided by the school indicates that while fixed-term exclusions remain higher than average, behaviour continues to improve and is acknowledged by the majority of pupils and parents as a strength of the school. For example, the number of pupils with more than one fixed-term exclusion is

significantly lower this year compared with last year. This demonstrates that the school's high expectations are leading to the improvement of pupils' behaviour.

- Inspectors also focused on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English at key stage 4. This is because the 2016 provisional results show that pupils made less progress in English than they did in mathematics or science, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Subject leaders have developed planning in English so that all GCSE classes now routinely follow the same curriculum. As a result, teachers across class groups measure rates of progress more easily. This leads to swifter intervention for the smaller number of pupils who are making less than expected progress. Observations of learning showed that pupils are aware of what they need to do to make progress.
- Current assessment information suggests that the progress of Year 11 pupils in English is good, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able. Leaders have identified that the development of pupils' literacy skills in key stage 3 is a priority to improve pupils' progress further in key stage 4.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum offered in the sixth form. This was because provisional 2016 outcomes indicated that students' progress was variable between different academic subjects.
- Leaders are working with other schools to share the teaching of subjects with lower student uptake. This means that a broader range of subjects remains on offer to students, but in a way which is more affordable for the school to maintain.
- Students in the sixth form are typically positive about the support that they receive. Leaders in the sixth form have developed effective tracking systems to support students' progress. Observations of learning showed that when teachers explore a topic in greater depth, this deepens students' thinking. Leaders are aware that they need to be more consistent in challenging the most able students in their learning. Current assessment information indicates that progress for students in Year 13, for example, is good overall.
- However, school leaders are aware of the need to ensure that the most able students make consistently rapid progress in the sixth form. Leaders are also aware that the proportion of students who successfully gain a C grade or higher from re-taking GCSE English and/or mathematics is too low.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make more rapid progress in English, with a particular focus on developing a more rigorous and demanding key stage 3 curriculum that prepares pupils fully for key stage 4
- outcomes improve in the sixth form, both for the most able students and those who are re-taking their GCSE English and/or mathematics
- the attendance of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities improves rapidly to match pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

David Boyle
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors agreed with you to look at the following areas:

- how effectively leaders have maintained effective safeguarding practices since the last inspection, given the rise in fixed-term exclusions and lower-than-average attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils
- the impact of leaders' actions to improve progress in English at key stage 4
- the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that the curriculum offer in the sixth form meets the needs of all students.

Inspectors carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding
- separate meetings with representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority
- holding informal conversations with pupils
- visits to 12 lessons jointly with members of the leadership team across all key stages
- analysis of a range of documentation including: assessment and attendance information; safeguarding information; minutes of governing body meetings; and school policies and procedures
- examination of the school's self-evaluation and aspects of the development plan
- consideration of the views of parents, who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, as well as responses to the pupil and staff survey.