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Mr Nick Law
Executive Head Teacher
Carre's Grammar School
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Dear Mr Law

Short inspection of Carre's Grammar School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Tim Croft, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and Carre's Grammar School remains a place where the strengths and talents of pupils and staff are highly valued. You and senior leaders have high expectations for your pupils and are committed to seeing each individual fulfil their potential. Middle leaders feel empowered to be strategic leaders due to your leadership of the school. Since the school's previous inspection, the progress of pupils continues to be at the forefront of your vision.

You have ensured that there is a strong focus on the development of the whole child and you and your staff encourage the pupils to be fully involved in the wider aspects of school life. Your ethos encourages pupils to be successful, enjoy learning and aim to achieve their potential. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic about being part of the school. Many pupils spoken to said that the school allows them to develop as students and is a 'cool' place to be. Punctuality to lessons is exemplary and the pupils' desire to be on time and be part of their lessons is a strength of your school.

Since the last inspection, you have continued to inspire and motivate leaders and your shared vision for continual improvement is embraced by them. Your approach to be an outward-facing school which collaboratively works with other schools within and beyond your multi-academy trust is a strength. You have rightly recognised that there is still work to do to ensure a collaborative approach to the joint sixth form, allowing for a smooth and informative transitional period for students joining Carre's

Grammar School as their base school for their post-16 education.

You have worked closely with your staff to develop teaching and create more opportunities for pupils to be involved in active learning. This was seen in many lessons during this inspection. You acknowledge that more is to be done to challenge the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and you are determined to address this.

Your new tracking system is yet to be fully effective. You and your middle leaders are beginning to use this system to monitor the attendance of pupils and the progress they make. Persistent absence is reducing due to your implementation of a new head of year structure. The heads of year are beginning to track pupils' attendance and progress and they work with their tutor teams to ensure that improvement continues. However, the tracking of groups of pupils is still an area for development. You have identified that leaders need to work more closely with teachers to ensure that pupils' progress and levels of persistent absence, in particular for disadvantaged pupils, is robustly monitored.

Parents who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View survey commented that they feel their children are encouraged towards, and are involved in, a range of extra-curricular activities. Some parents expressed concerns that their children are not being 'pushed' in lessons, but feel the school is a 'good' school. You acknowledge that providing further challenge is an area for development for the school. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel bullying is rare at Carre's Grammar School and that if it does ever occur it is dealt with rapidly by you and your staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your senior leaders have created a culture of vigilance among your pupils and staff. Your own rapid actions to complete a safeguarding risk assessment and act upon its recommendations demonstrate that the welfare and safety of your pupils, staff and visitors to the school are paramount. Governors, staff and senior leaders are fully aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) is tenacious and ensures that all staff are aware of current safeguarding updates and relevant training. You and your DSL take quick and effective action where there is a concern regarding pupils' welfare. The DSL, in particular, works closely with parents and local agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they require. You and senior leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils at the school feel safe. Those who spoke with inspectors were unanimous in saying they are happy and well cared for in school. They are confident that adults within the school will help them if needed. Pupils spoke with a good knowledge and understanding about the ways that they can stay safe, for example when online.

Inspection findings

- You and your leadership team have introduced an assessment system to track and monitor the progress and attendance of all pupils. You and your senior leaders have put in place regular accountability meetings with subject leaders to closely examine the information this new system gives you. You are keen that the system helps to ensure that pupils, and in particular the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve highly. You are determined that attendance for all groups of pupils will be better than that seen in most schools. This system is new and yet to be fully effective. It is too soon to measure its impact.
- Your outward-looking approach to learn from other schools within and beyond your multi-academy trust is allowing for teaching and learning to develop. You embrace new ideas and strategies. Since the previous inspection, you have worked with your senior leadership team and subject leaders to develop lessons that focus on pupils being able to take ownership of their learning. This was seen particularly in lessons such as history, English and design and technology, where pupils were fully and passionately engaged in debating their responses to the questions asked of them by their teachers. You have rightly identified that there is more to be done to stretch and challenge the most able pupils during lessons in subject areas such as science and French, so that they are able to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- You acknowledge that persistent absence for pupils entitled to free school meals, although below national average, is a concern. Implementing the new structure of heads of year has allowed your middle leaders to take ownership of attendance and there is an improving picture. Pupils have welcomed the introduction of a rewards system linked to attendance. One pupil summarised that 'it is nice to be rewarded for attending all your lessons'. During the observations and throughout the day, punctuality was exemplary. Pupils are keen to be in their lessons.
- Pupils and parents have welcomed the linking of enrichment activities with the rest of the curriculum, an approach that is now a well-established part of school life. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils develop as well-rounded individuals. Leaders need to ensure that there is a clearer understanding of the impact this funding has on the progress these pupils make.
- Tutors know the pupils well. Pupils spoke highly of their tutors and the positive relationships they have with them. One pupil summarised that 'it is the tutors' job to care and support us all'. The female students in the sixth form commented that once they have joined the school at sixth form, the pastoral teams make them feel welcome and fully integrated into school life. However, some of the female students said that teachers take longer to get to know them and their learning needs, which slows the rate at which they make progress. There is work to do to ensure that students who join the school for the first time at sixth form integrate swiftly into lessons and get off to a flying start.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress and attendance of all groups of pupils are carefully monitored, so that they attend well and achieve highly
- when students join the sixth form they are fully equipped to engage in their learning
- teachers set the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, suitably challenging tasks so that they make more progress
- they ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Wicken
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your senior leaders and staff. Inspectors observed the learning that was taking place in several lessons. You accompanied me on some of these visits. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour within and beyond the classroom. Inspectors also met with a selection of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. One inspector met with a group of eight female post-16 students. I met with you, your chair of governors, deputy headteacher, director of finance, and the DSL. Inspectors examined a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, attendance, achievement and the school's use of pupil premium funding. I also took into account the school's context and its own self-evaluation. I scrutinised the school's single central record and your recruitment procedures. Inspectors took into account the 90 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.