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Ms Kuljit Rahelu
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Rahelu

Short inspection of Hornsey School for Girls

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 2017 with Hayley Follett, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

On your appointment in April 2015, the governors tasked you with the responsibility for undertaking a full staff review. This presented many challenges, particularly around staff morale. However, your strong leadership and the continuous support of governors ensured that the needs of your pupils were given the highest priority. Your drive, determination and resilience ensured that high-quality teaching and learning were maintained during this turbulent time. As a result, in 2016, the majority of pupils made very good progress from their starting points. You have now appointed a competent leadership team whose members share your clear vision and values for the school and its pupils. You have successfully established a creative learning community where both staff and pupils can thrive. Staff say that they are proud to work at the school and are committed to ensuring that every pupil makes the progress of which they are capable.

Your governors have offered substantial support throughout and have been instrumental in helping you sustain a positive and productive learning ethos during this difficult time. They are an experienced, dedicated and knowledgeable group who are proud of their community school. They are committed to strengthening their links still further with parents and the wider community in order to increase their capacity and to make more opportunities available to pupils.

They share your vision for encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their

attitudes and conduct, both in school and in the wider community. They have high aspirations for the continuing success of the school and a clear and effective plan to achieve this.

Pupils throughout the school enjoy the nurturing and safe learning community that you have created. Their conduct, particularly in lessons, is mature and based on mutual respect, tolerance and courtesy. Pupils have high ambitions and work hard to achieve them. They are genuinely interested in their studies and consequently, enjoy working hard. You and your staff are committed to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school offers opportunities in abundance for pupils to perform and explore different forms of dance, music and drama. Participation rates are high and pupils are committed to excelling in these activities. Equally, the large school site provides excellent sporting facilities and a vibrant library where pupils can extend their love of reading. Staff know each and every pupil well and consequently, support is effectively tailored to their needs.

You and the deputy headteacher have successfully addressed the area for improvement identified during the inspection in February 2013. A whole-school focus on ensuring high-quality teaching and learning across the school is having a positive impact. You and your skilled leadership team have developed a comprehensive and effective professional development programme for staff that includes training and opportunities to share best practice. Middle and senior leaders systematically and regularly check on the quality of teaching to ensure that it is of the highest quality. In this, and other ways, you are eradicating any inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and ensuring that all pupils make good progress from their starting points. Staff commented on the 'countless' opportunities available to them and described the programme as of 'an exceptionally high quality' and making 'an outstanding impact on pedagogy'. Newly qualified teachers also value highly the support they receive.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are comprehensive and in line with current statutory guidelines. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They understand their responsibility to keep pupils, and students in the sixth form, safe. Staff are clear about the potential risks in the wider community, including female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation linked to gang affiliation. They are familiar with the 'Prevent' duty and understand the warning signs for those at risk of radicalisation and extremism. Equally, your team acknowledges that mental health issues and stress are having a negative impact on some pupils. As a result, you and your staff work closely with a variety of external agencies that provide support for hard-to-reach families, those suffering from mental health issues and those identified as potentially at risk. Links with the local authority, particularly the designated child protection officer, are strong and effective.

Pupils receive regular information on how they can keep themselves safe at school

and in the wider community. You have created an ethos where pupils feel safe to share their concerns. The 'core learning' slot at the start of each day provides an opportunity for pupils to discuss any arising issues with their tutor. The school provides counsellors, student support officers and mentors. A nurse visits the sixth form once a week to offer guidance. The site is very secure; staff, visitors and sixth-form students wear identity lanyards or badges and routinely sign in and out. Parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire were generally happy with the support their children receive. As one parent said, 'My daughter's form tutor has been fantastic – being very good at using tutor time for team building, developing self-confidence and making the girls feel valued and special.'

Inspection findings

- The inclusive sixth form promotes the idea of students obtaining the 'Edge' – 'excellence, drive, graduate and enrich' in preparation for the competitive outside world. Strong leadership ensures that this vision permeates the sixth form. Equally, students receive excellent guidance through the 'personalised careers development (PCD) programme and five external organisations offer mentoring and information. As a result, the vast majority go on to their chosen university or apprenticeship. Students have high aspirations and work very hard, utilising the facilities offered by the separate sixth-form block and competing for sixth-form leadership roles. Students enjoy attending school, with one describing it as 'like a family'. Historically, students have made good progress in both academic and work-related courses. However, school leaders acknowledge that in 2016, students' progress in some courses was more variable. They have identified the changes in staffing during the review as a key factor in this. The current A-level teaching team is experienced and has good subject knowledge. Consequently, the school's assessment information indicates that current students are making good progress.
- Across the school and from different starting points, the majority of pupils make very good progress. The curriculum presents pupils with opportunities to study and participate in a range of events, performances and charitable acts. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is very strong. Consequently, the majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, attend regularly, work hard and excel.
- School leaders have instigated a detailed assessment system that tracks the progress of all pupils, and groups of pupils, across the school. 'Context' sheets are used in class to ensure that all staff are aware of pupils' needs and targets. Regular checks ensure that they quickly identify any pupil who starts to underachieve and leaders provide timely and effective support. This could include help with literacy or numeracy skills or support for their emotional and social well-being. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) carefully monitors a number of pupils who have very complex needs and require 'wraparound care'.
- Leaders work effectively with families to encourage better attendance, address their children's learning needs and support their emotional development. Each pupil has a specific learning plan encompassing support in school and where appropriate, from external agencies. Progress for these pupils is discussed at the

fortnightly 'pupil progress' review meetings and in many cases, ensures that they make similar progress to others at the school.

- School leaders are not complacent. They know that some current pupils are not making the same, substantial progress demonstrated by others at the school. They have identified specific pupils within some groups who require bespoke support to maximise the progress they are making. These include some middle- and high prior attainment pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged. Every effort is being made to identify the specific and often complex issues for individual pupils and provide bespoke support so that they can make substantial progress from their starting points. The range of support the school provides is impressive and has had a marked impact on individual pupils. Additional government funding is used effectively to target pupils with personalised strategies and care, while ensuring that teaching in the classroom is of a consistently high standard. However, leaders recognise that they need to check more systematically that these initiatives are having the desired impact on the progress made by identified groups as a whole, and not just by individual pupils.
- The school has identified a small minority of pupils who have very challenging personal circumstances and whose attendance remains too low. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that these pupils and their families receive appropriate support. They employ student support officers to encourage pupils to come to school and promote the importance of regular attendance. This work is ongoing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- actions to secure more substantial progress for identified groups, including some middle- and high-ability disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are regularly monitored to check that they are having a positive impact
- the attendance of identified pupils continues to be a whole-school priority for improvement.

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

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors carried out the following activities:

- meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors and those new to teaching
- a phone call with the local authority's head of school standards
- pupils in Year 8 were heard reading
- visits to a number of classes with senior leaders
- scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' work and discussions with pupils
- informal discussions with pupils, and students in the sixth form
- 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, 43 responses to the staff survey and 50 responses to the pupil survey were taken into account
- an evaluation of documents provided by the school, including school development plans, reviews, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement.