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Mr Dave Borrell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Borrell

### **Short inspection of Park View School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with David Penny, additional 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 June 2013.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following turbulence in leadership, staffing and governance after the last inspection, you now have enthusiastic, ambitious and settled teams of staff and governors. They are working with you to continue to improve the school, to address pupils' previous barriers to learning and to help pupils achieve well so that they are prepared successfully for their future lives.

Standards have risen since the last inspection. For example, in the past two years there has been significant improvement in the proportion of pupils leaving Year 11 with qualifications in a range of GCSE subjects. The proportion achieving average grades in both English and mathematics in summer 2017 was well above that found in similar schools nationally. Almost all pupils secure a range of nationally recognised qualifications by the time they leave Year 11. The rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching has contributed effectively to these improvements and to the generally good progress that pupils make, from their entry into school, across a range of subjects. The focus on recruiting specialist subject teachers has also supported improvements and broadened the range of subjects that pupils can study.

At the last inspection, leaders were required to ensure that all pupils understood their personalised learning targets. Teachers were required to challenge pupils to think about what they were learning and to work harder. A comprehensive assessment system is now in place that identifies pupils' starting points on entry.

This information is used by teachers to develop pupils' learning targets across the curriculum. Pupils generally know what these targets are and what they need to do to achieve them. Teachers usually use this assessment information effectively to plan activities that help pupils move on successfully from what they already know and understand. However, on occasions, work is not matched precisely enough to pupils' current levels of understanding. This means that work is sometimes too hard for the least able pupils and too easy for the most able. This is particularly the case in writing and you have rightly prioritised this as an area for improvement. Last year, your checks of pupils' workbooks indicated that pupils' poor presentation is not challenged by staff consistently. As a result, the lead practitioner is working with staff to improve the quality of pupils' presentation in their workbooks.

A focus of this inspection was to check whether pupils' attendance was improving. By summer 2016, rates had fallen to well below average, and well below that found for special schools nationally. The proportion of pupils persistently absent was far too high. You have taken a wide range of actions to address this weakness, including improving the curriculum to make it more enticing for pupils so that they want to come to school. Incentives such as 'PVS Fridays' (the school's incentive day) and celebrations of pupils' good attendance are encouraging pupils to attend more regularly. The decisions to use staff to collect pupils at the start of the day and to work with families to encourage better punctuality are also contributing to the improvements. Attendance rates are still below average but have increased by over 13 percentage points in the past year. The proportion of pupils persistently absent has reduced by over half.

The promotion of pupils' personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and work to improve their behaviour and attitudes remain strengths. Pupils have often been out of school for considerable periods of time before being placed at Park View. They are often very disaffected with education. Once they arrive, they settle in quickly and start to value the benefits of learning. This is due to the strong relationships developed between staff and pupils. Parents are highly positive about the education, care and support that their children receive. Those who contributed written comments in Ofsted's parental questionnaire explained movingly about the transformation of their children once they came to Park View.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, governors and staff are trained well in how to keep pupils safe. Safer recruitment procedures are strong and the school's safeguarding policy is up to date and used to inform practice. You and your staff have a good understanding of risks to pupils' safety. Significant work is undertaken to ensure that pupils understand about risks in the wider community, including risks from drugs, alcohol, sexual exploitation, internet grooming, antisocial behaviour and crime. Staff work closely with families to support them at times of great need or crisis. They work with local agencies such as the police, local authority early help teams and children's social care to ensure that pupils at risk of harm can be identified and the right support secured in a timely way. Pupils say that they feel safe and they appreciate the work that staff undertake to help them keep safe at school and in the local community. They acknowledge that bullying

behaviour happens on occasions but recognise the robust way in which staff tackle any incidents.

### **Inspection findings**

- Inspectors came to school to see if the school was improving and if the weaker areas identified in the last report had been tackled. As deputy headteacher and now headteacher, you have worked successfully with governors to address past weaknesses and continue to improve the school. You have a passion and commitment to ensure that all pupils in Park View get the best deal possible. This is to enable them to achieve well and to improve their life chances after school. Governors and staff readily embrace this commitment. They are working with you to address pupils' previous barriers to learning and to help them to make a success of their time in Park View. You are working with post-16 providers of education, employment and training effectively to tackle prejudices and to ensure that more pupils can move on successfully to their chosen destinations after school.
- At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching further. This has been a major focus of your and the lead practitioner's work. Actions taken have reaped rewards and the quality continues to improve. Regular training and coaching have built teachers' skills and expertise successfully. Visits to outstanding schools have enabled staff to reflect and learn from outstanding practice. Time-limited plans have supported teachers who needed extra help to improve their skills.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching are ensuring that more pupils are making good progress from their starting points across the curriculum. Progress in mathematics is stronger than that in English. Teachers do not make sure that activities move pupils on from their different starting points as successfully in writing as they do in mathematics. The focus on improving reading skills is paying dividends, however. Pupils read more regularly in lessons and have a wider range of resources to choose from in the recently developed library.
- Inspectors also wanted to check whether different groups of pupils were achieving as well as each other. There are only 41 pupils so comparisons between groups of pupils, such as boys and girls and disadvantaged pupils, are difficult to measure. However, you track individual pupils and groups to make sure that anyone at risk of falling behind is identified so that extra support and help can be put in place in between lesson times. This is helping to ensure that pupils at risk of falling behind can catch up and make similar progress to their peers.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are a notable strength. Staff know the pupils well and have a constant focus on developing pupils' self-esteem, resilience and self-belief. This helps to counteract some of the very negative feelings that pupils have about school. It gives them the confidence to 'have a go' and take an active role in their learning. Staff are adept at spotting slight variations in pupils' behaviour or attitude. They quickly and quietly intervene and support pupils when potential flare-ups might occur. This effectively minimises the risks of unwanted behaviours and helps pupils quickly get back to their work.

This also ensures that the learning of other pupils continues without disruption. Careful tracking of pupils' behaviour shows that there has been a reduction in episodes of inappropriate behaviour over the past year as a result of strategies that staff use.

- A wide range of work helps pupils to keep safe and enables them to gain an understanding of the values that are key to taking a successful part in British society. The personal, social and health education and religious education curriculum and visits to places of worship such as mosques, synagogues and Buddhist temples provide hands-on experiences and understanding of world faiths. Charity work, work in the local community and the many visits out of the area contribute to pupils' understanding of communities and cultures beyond school. Such work is helping to develop pupils' understanding of qualities such as trust and respect for others.
- Governance is effective. Governors are committed to improving their own practice through regular training and constant reflection on their effectiveness. They take care in recruiting new governors with the right mix of skills and knowledge to carry out their varying roles. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because of the increasingly evaluative and regular information that they receive about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Governors are taking action to ensure that the school's website meets statutory requirements.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to improve pupils' writing skills in English and across the curriculum are embedded so that pupils' progress in English is as strong as in mathematics
- teachers challenge pupils' poor presentation of work consistently so that the quality of their work improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and the lead practitioner, staff, five representatives of the governing body and the local authority's school improvement partner. Inspectors visited learning across the school and I was accompanied by the lead practitioner. We talked informally to pupils in lessons, at breaktime and

lunchtime and formally to a group of pupils. Inspectors analysed a range of documentation, including leaders' written evaluation of the school's work, improvement plans and information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. We checked a range of policies and procedures, including those to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also considered the 18 parental responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.