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Mrs Andrea Cavanagh
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Dear Mrs Cavanagh

Short inspection of All Hallows RC High School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with Bernard Robinson HMI, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leaders and all staff work hard to provide an environment in which pupils feel safe and happy while they achieve as well as they can in their studies. Your ethos, 'The unique value of each person is recognised and respected', is exemplified in all aspects of provision. The pastoral care you provide for all your pupils is exemplary, especially for those who are vulnerable in some way. A comment from one parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey captures this well: 'It is a very friendly school. My daughter has enjoyed it since the first day she started. She feels very confident there. She knows that she can trust her teachers and that she will always get help when needed. I am very happy that my child is attending this school.' The views expressed in this comment were reinforced by the many pupils who spoke to inspectors during the inspection.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. The vast majority of pupils said they are listened to and feel well supported. When pupils work together in lessons, and in their day-to-day interactions, they show a high level of respect for each other and for different opinions. They articulate their ideas very well and appreciate the diversity that exists within the school community.

Since the previous inspection, you have maintained the school's many strengths and made the necessary improvements to areas of weakness identified at that time. You know the school well: your self-evaluation is honest, accurate and understood by all, including governors. Your plans to address the areas that need to improve are

appropriately targeted. It is clear how the success of planned actions is to be measured and who is leading the actions.

Since the last inspection, the school has moved into a new building. There have been several changes in leadership roles, including at senior and subject leader level, to further strengthen leadership. You work in partnership to share good practice with a number of schools, both locally and nationally. Your provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is held up as an example of good practice within the local authority.

You have further raised expectations of teachers and pupils. Pupils are set aspirational targets and teachers use accurate assessment information to plan learning activities at the right level, so that pupils of all abilities are able to make good progress. As a result, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making better progress.

There has been a good deal of progress in developing the quality of marking and feedback. On many occasions, pupils respond to this feedback and this enhances their learning. There are still some inconsistencies to be ironed out, but leaders are continuing to work on this.

Helpfully, since the previous inspection governors have received training which has prepared them well for understanding the most up-to-date national presentation of information about pupils' performance. Governors receive regular reports and ask challenging questions of school leaders. They understand what the data is telling them and expect leaders to explain the impact of their actions on outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of the school's practice. Staff and governors are regularly updated on safeguarding procedures. Staff know how to report any concerns. Record-keeping is detailed and of high quality, showing that staff follow procedures appropriately. The designated safeguarding leaders treat safeguarding concerns with a high degree of professionalism and rigorously follow through referrals to other agencies. They work closely with parents and other professionals. Senior leaders regularly undertake learning walks specifically focused on safeguarding.

The school has an on-site specialist unit, funded by the local authority, for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. This provides a nurturing, safe learning and social environment for some of the school's most vulnerable pupils. It is well used by the school and pupils who learn there are very appreciative of the support they receive.

The pastoral team works effectively to support pupils and to make sure they are safe. Pupils' personal development programme has a strong focus on keeping safe. Pupils are confident that the curriculum helps them to explore the risks they could

face in the local community and online. Pupils told inspectors they know who to go to if they have any worries. They feel safe in school and are confident that, on the small number of occasions when it does arise, bullying is tackled quickly and effectively. Parents also agree that their children are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- One of my key lines of enquiry was to find out why pupils did not make good progress in English in 2017. In previous years, despite their overall attainment on entry being significantly below average, all groups of pupils reached levels of attainment in line with national averages. This represented good progress from low starting points. Leaders have identified the reasons for this untypical picture in English. These include changes in staffing and leadership, a mismatch between the particular areas of focus in schemes of work and the new subject specifications, and a year group that faced challenges due to previously weak literacy skills. You have addressed staffing issues and have carried out a lot of work to ensure that teachers are helping pupils develop the relevant skills to successfully tackle the requirements of the new English examinations. You are placing a strong focus on developing literacy across the curriculum. The recently appointed deputy headteacher, who has a strong track record of successful leadership in English and literacy, is providing support for, and working closely with, the English team. Tracking information, inspectors' own observations of lessons and work in pupils' books provided evidence that current cohorts of pupils are making good progress in English.
- Other lines of enquiry were to consider whether attendance and behaviour are good for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, girls and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You place a strong focus on the benefits of good attendance and work closely with external agencies to secure good attendance for all pupils. Attendance has risen steadily over the past four years, since the last inspection. Over the past two years, overall attendance has been in line with the national average and is continuing to rise in this school year. Currently, the attendance of most groups of pupils is above the national average. While it is improving, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains a priority because some of these pupils are persistently absent. This has been identified as such on the current school improvement plan.
- School behaviour records show that behaviour is good for all groups of pupils. This was noted by inspectors during their visits to lessons and while observing pupils moving around the school between lessons and during social times. The number of fixed-term exclusions is low when compared with the national average. The overwhelming majority of staff, parents and pupils say that behaviour is good. Pupils say that lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour because when poor behaviour does arise it is swiftly and consistently dealt with by staff.
- A further inspection focus was on the curriculum and its impact on outcomes, especially for girls, the most able and pupils for whom English is a first language. By the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve high standards in the majority of

subjects. Further analysis of tracking information and outcomes over time showed that there are no negative trends in outcomes for any particular groups of pupils. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at All Hallows is more than double the national average. The differences between the attainment levels being achieved by these pupils and others nationally are diminishing because of the targeted support they receive from teachers and other adults.

- Achievement has been strong over time in several subjects, including mathematics, science and languages. Pupils' progress has been weaker in some subjects, including geography, history and computer science. Staffing and leadership issues in these subjects have, in recent years, led to some weak teaching and poor outcomes. Leaders' actions to stabilise staffing and strengthen leadership are proving effective, and some improvement is now evident in these subjects. However, leaders acknowledge that further work needs to be done in history and geography. The dip in outcomes in science that occurred in 2016 has been curbed by changes to examination entry patterns, and results in both the dual and triple award sciences in 2017 demonstrate good progress. Teaching is strong in science and work seen in pupils' books reflects the positive impact on progress of effective teaching over time.
- The curriculum is reviewed annually, taking into account the needs of current cohorts. Other schools locally have come to talk to leaders at All Hallows about the way their curriculum has been developed, since it is held up as a model of good practice. Careers education, information, advice and guidance are of high quality and the school holds a Gold Award for its work in this area. Leaders have determined that the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualification is not appropriate for all pupils. Where it is, pupils are encouraged to complete it: the proportion of pupils successfully completing the EBacc qualification has risen over the past three years.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in history and geography are further improved
- leaders work even more closely with parents and external agencies to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- even more opportunities are provided for teachers and leaders to share good practice within and beyond the school, so that more teaching becomes outstanding and standards of attainment increase further.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Gaunt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and your senior leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

We conducted several learning walks, including two jointly with senior leaders, and looked at work in pupils' books during lessons. We met with groups of pupils and took account of 64 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

The 10 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, and five free-text comments were reviewed. There were 52 responses to the online staff questionnaire and these were also analysed.

We scrutinised a range of documentation relating to attendance and behaviour. We also looked at the school's own self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings, information on the school's website, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.