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15 November 2017

Jacqueline Valin and Wanda Golinska  
Principal and Headteacher  
Southfields Academy  
333 Merton Road  
Wandsworth  
London  
SW18 5JU

Dear Ms Valin and Ms Golinska,

### **Short inspection of Southfields Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with Beverley Johnston, 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 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. You and your leadership team have ensured that all pupils, whatever their background, leave the school with a secure future. You are committed to meeting the diverse needs of your pupils. For example, the 'international group', which caters for pupils arriving from abroad, draws pupils from a wide area. This group enriches the cultural life of the school, for instance through your well-attended international evening.

The same ethos is evident in your flourishing sixth form. It is a considerable achievement by your leaders that 90% of your Year 11 pupils stay on into the sixth form.

Inspectors found that since the last inspection, teachers are using feedback effectively to challenge and guide pupils in their learning. Your leadership team carefully checks that every pupil is making the progress they should. The well-considered training you provide for teachers gives them more confidence to plan effectively for all pupils.

Your leadership has secured an orderly and welcoming school. Inspectors observed high standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school. One pupil, new to the school, said, 'The school is helpful and has made it really easy for me to settle in and make new friends.'

You and your leadership team are well supported by a team of trustees. They

strongly support the ethos of the school, visit regularly and ask appropriately challenging questions of your actions.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that a strong culture of safeguarding is embedded in the school. Systems are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The single central record of staff recruitment checks is comprehensive and up to date.

All staff are trained to a high level and receive regular safeguarding updates, including 'Prevent' duty. Staff are vigilant about checking for signs that pupils may be at risk, both in school and in the wider community.

Senior staff have ensured that concerns about pupils, including those arriving alone from abroad, are followed up meticulously with a large range of external agencies and groups. One of your senior leaders chairs the local police strategy group. This helps to keep staff well informed about community issues.

Your leaders have created a culture of mutual respect among pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they felt very safe and knew whom to approach if they had a concern. They said that rare instances of bullying, including cyber bullying, were effectively and quickly dealt with by the school.

You and your leaders have taken effective action to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Latest figures provided by the school show some impact. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent is still higher than national rates.

### **Inspection findings**

- We first looked to see what effect the wide-ranging number of courses available at key stages 4 and 5 had on pupils' outcomes. You have successfully developed pathways which lead to a range of appropriate destinations, including Russell Group universities and apprenticeships. Virtually all pupils find worthwhile destinations in either continuing education, apprenticeships or employment. This year's progress information shows that your pupils are achieving above national average rates at GCSE. 2016 results show that they are also making above-average progress in A-level and other post-16 courses. Your leaders continually review the courses on offer to make sure that they are fit for purpose. Pupils have benefited considerably from your innovative curriculum.
- We then agreed to investigate how successfully the school provides for the welfare and progress of pupils arriving from abroad. You accept large numbers of pupils into the school during Years 10 and 11 throughout the year. By creating a separate group, you have been able to offer a range of courses carefully tailored to meet their needs, without disrupting the progress of other pupils. Inspectors were impressed by pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their growing confidence. The acquisition of subject-specific vocabulary together with effective pastoral care is given a high priority and ensures that pupils achieve extremely

well.

- We then agreed to find out how consistent the quality of teaching is across the school. The 2016 results showed that pupils were not achieving as well in modern foreign languages and English as they were in other subjects. You have acted quickly to make staffing changes in these areas. Leaders regularly visit classrooms to monitor the quality of teaching and provide teachers with helpful advice to improve their teaching. Inspectors found that pupils were actively engaged in their learning and enjoying the activities on offer. Results in both subjects have improved following your decisive actions, which have been replicated across the school so that teaching is consistently strong.
- Finally, we checked to see how far the most able pupils were being challenged in lessons. The 2016 results showed that this group were not progressing as well as other groups in the school. Progress of the most able was also an area for improvement at the last inspection. In many lessons teachers used a range of techniques to challenge most-able pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. In a few lessons challenge was not so evident. According to your information, the most able pupils in Year 11 made better progress this year. However, the rate of progress is still not as rapid as for the cohort as a whole. Your work to increase levels of challenge in teaching for the most able is showing some impact but is not yet fully established.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent attend more regularly
- the most able pupils make substantial progress.

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

Yours sincerely

James Whiting  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

My colleague and I met with you both and a deputy head to agree the areas we would look at. We met with other senior and middle leaders, pupils, and trustees during the day. We visited several lessons and scrutinised the work of pupils. We also inspected a range of school documentation.