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Mrs Denise Webster  
Headteacher  
Norwood School  
Crown Dale  
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London  
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Dear Mrs Webster

### **Short inspection of Norwood School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 2017 with Katerina Christodoulou, 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 September 2014.

### **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 team are building a strong learning community that works effectively with staff, parents, pupils and a wide network of stakeholders. You and your leadership team, including those responsible for governance, use your detailed knowledge of the school to make a positive impact on the life chances of pupils.

Central to your school's work is the determination to ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, succeed academically. Pupils, governors, leaders and staff share your high expectations of learning and the personal development of all pupils. This is also reflected within the range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities about which pupils speak enthusiastically and from which they benefit. You offer a broad and balanced curriculum that is strengthened by links with colleges, businesses and arts organisations. Pupils are aware that leaders plan the curriculum carefully to take account of their specific interests and needs. Pupils speak confidently about their school and talk with a sense of pride. Others agreed when one pupil said: 'I just wish others knew how good this school is.'

You and your leadership team have continued to develop how staff use the information they gather about pupils' strengths and weaknesses across the school.

This has ensured that the quality of teaching improves and standards rise. Leaders check the impact of teaching and assessment well. They work with staff to help them use all assessment information effectively. This has allowed leaders to prioritise learning at a higher standard and at greater depth for all pupils, including the most able. This is an area that continues to be priority. Leaders are aware that higher prior attainers need to increase their rates of progress, especially by the end of key stages 4 and 5.

Since the last inspection, attendance has improved. Your team explained the actions it has taken to ensure that attendance remains high. You and your team have worked hard to ensure that pupils and parents understand the impact of low attendance on progress.

Throughout the school, it was evident that pupils behave respectfully and conduct themselves well. You and your team have worked hard to ensure that all staff and pupils take personal responsibility for improving pupils' behaviour, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Pupils like the emphasis you have placed on rewards and the focus that is placed on pupils 'doing the right thing'. As a result, in most lessons, pupils work in a calm and purposeful learning environment.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors focus on ensuring that pupils' well-being and safety are paramount. This is reflected in the thorough safeguarding arrangements and detailed recruitment checks, which are fit for purpose. Leaders have built a strong and vigilant safeguarding culture through comprehensive safeguarding training.

Staff act promptly when dealing with safeguarding issues, and draw on external support in a timely manner. Leaders ensure that all pupils learn well and make progress. This is possible because of the effective use of assessment information by a range of teams across the school who make links between attendance, absence, safeguarding concerns and pupils' progress.

Pupils were able to speak about the range of information that is shared with them about how to keep safe in the local area and further afield. Pupils understand and know how to keep safe. They learn about this in tutor time, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and in assemblies. Pupils are confident that they feel safe at school and know how to keep safe, including when online. Pupils speak about the wealth of support that staff, including members of the pastoral team, offer them. Pupils say that they know whom to go to if they have a concern, and are confident that their concerns will be dealt with promptly and sensitively. In addition, a high proportion of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their child is safe at school and that bullying is rare.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to focus on how effectively leaders have ensured that pupils, including the most able, are challenged and how effectively assessment

information is used. You and your team have worked hard to ensure that in 2017, at the end of key stage 4, pupils made better progress than pupils nationally. This is an improvement on previous years and since the last inspection. During the inspection, it was evident that leaders have improved the ways in which assessment information is used so that teaching meets pupils' needs. This includes students in the sixth form.

- Teachers across a range of subjects are making more consistent use of assessment information to plan and shape learning. For example, pupils in science lessons are set tasks that build on prior learning and offer stretch. Leaders now place greater emphasis on checking pupils' progress in mathematics so that they attain higher standards.
- Evidence in pupils' books and from what pupils said about what they learn shows that pupils, including the most able, experience work that presents them with greater challenge. For example, pupils were able to describe some of the more demanding tasks they are set in a wide range of subjects. In addition, work in pupils' books reflects that teachers have addressed areas of concern from the last inspection, and that expectations of what pupils can achieve has increased across the board. Leaders and governors are still, rightly, prioritising the progress and attainment of the most able pupils. However, it is already evident that, across most subject areas, 2017 provisional outcomes were higher than in previous years for all pupils, although progress in mathematics remains a key issue for the school.
- Pupils respond well to the higher expectations that teachers have of their work. When talking about their learning, pupils were very aware of the higher standards expected of them and of the support they are given to reach or exceed their targets. Through skilful questioning, pupils get opportunities to deepen and consolidate their learning and, thus, achieve at greater depth.
- To identify the impact of special educational needs (SEN) provision, we agreed to gather evidence related to these pupils, including those who have an education, health and care plan. Recent data outcomes and current school information indicate that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well. This is, in part, due to the effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning. We found that provision for these pupils has an impact in a range of subjects across the school. It is clear that current provision meets pupils' academic, social and emotional needs.
- Another area of focus during the inspection was the sixth form. Since the last inspection, standards have been variable with differences in achievement between different courses, as well as variation in the rates of retention. From discussions with leaders and students, it is clear that you and your leaders have made changes to provision that ensure that students make good progress and attain higher standards. There is no longer any significant difference between the progress and attainment of boys and girls across different courses. However, although more students now gain higher grades and move on to Russell Group universities, leaders are not complacent. They are focusing on the curriculum in key stage 4 to ensure that there are clear pathways for pupils to progress into the sixth form. Where this is not possible for some pupils, leaders are ensuring

that pupils are aware of all their post-16 choices beyond the school.

- Our final area of focus was on attendance. We found that, since the last inspection, rates of attendance have continued to improve. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and behaviour across the school. Where there are concerns about persistent absence, leaders act swiftly and put in place the required support. Leaders speak knowledgeably about patterns of absence that relate to a small minority of pupils, and use this information well to ensure that attendance remains high. In lessons, it was evident that pupils are keen to attend school and have been helped to understand that poor attendance can have a negative impact on their progress. This has had a positive effect on pupils' engagement during lessons. Pupils make a positive contribution to the calm and purposeful environment around the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to ensure that most-able pupils make rapid progress and attain higher grades, especially in mathematics
- the sixth-form curriculum allows more key stage 4 pupils to continue courses in the sixth form and make good progress as they move to the next stage of education.

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

Yours sincerely

Jennese Alozie  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, the inspectors carried out the following activities. They:

- held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, governors and a local authority representative
- met with groups of pupils, including students in the sixth form
- listened to a group of pupils read
- visited lessons with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team
- considered responses to Parent View
- reviewed a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and

improvement plans; information about pupils' outcomes, progress and attendance; and safeguarding procedures

- scrutinised the school's single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school, and carried out website checks to confirm that it meets publication requirements.