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Ms Michelle Currie
Executive Principal
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Dear Ms Currie

Short inspection of Walton High

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your determined leadership has steered the school effectively through a challenging period of change and expansion. You believe strongly that every pupil in the school deserves high-quality education, regardless of his or her ability or circumstance. You are well supported by your leadership team, whose members share your determination to provide the very best for every pupil. As a result, most pupils make strong progress and achieve well.

Pupils follow a broad and well-considered curriculum which prepares them effectively for their next steps. Pupils' work is presented well and demonstrates their secure progress. Leaders track pupils' achievement in all year groups meticulously and regularly, so that teachers can provide prompt and effective help for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. In Year 11, for example, any pupils who are not fulfilling their potential are directed to relevant catch-up and revision lessons after school. You are rightly proud of your sixth form, where students flourish in a wide range of academic and applied subjects.

Pupils behaved very well throughout the inspection. Staff and pupils told inspectors that this is typical. The vast majority of pupils are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. They enjoy school and appreciate the wide range of clubs and activities on offer, which is reflected in their good attendance overall. A minority of pupils do not behave as well as the rest. Leaders recognise the urgency with which this needs to be addressed.

School leaders monitor the quality of teaching closely and check its effect on pupils' progress. Since the last inspection, leaders have improved teaching during key stage 3 and in English and mathematics. Leaders know the strengths of the school and where further improvements are required, such as in the progress of some boys, some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of vigilance and support to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure. Any concerns are identified and addressed quickly. All staff and governors receive regular training on how to keep children safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Safeguarding records are detailed and of high quality.

Staff work with sensitivity and determination alongside parents, carers and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Pupils state that staff are approachable and that they know an adult they can turn to if they have any worries. Pupils appreciate the care and concern that staff have for their welfare and well-being.

Inspection findings

- Boys' progress and the achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities dipped at the end of key stage 4 in 2017. Leaders have acted swiftly to make sure that both groups' progress improves. Training for staff has been effective. As a result, boys now make more rapid progress and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are achieving much more. School leaders are rightly focusing on further accelerating these pupils' progress.
- The majority of pupils behave well and are keen to learn, working with effort, diligence and pride. They are polite, smartly dressed and socialise happily together. Incidents of bullying have reduced markedly, and on the relatively rare occasions it does occur, leaders act quickly and effectively. Most pupils attend regularly. The behaviour and attendance of a stubborn minority of pupils, however, are not as good. This affects the views some parents, pupils and staff have about behaviour. Leaders' actions have yet to bring about necessary improvements for these pupils. There is inconsistency in how some staff manage these pupils' behaviour and, consequently, fixed-term exclusions are relatively high.
- School leaders provide effective support to help teachers improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely and give prompt and effective help if pupils are at risk of falling behind. While disadvantaged pupils' achievement is improving well, it does not yet match that of other pupils. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils have access to all enrichment activities, for example they are bought the equipment they need to complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of boys, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils continues to accelerate
- the behaviour and attendance of a minority of pupils improves rapidly through focused and consistent action by leaders and staff.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of Milton Keynes Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Milton Keynes. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Anne Turner, Patrick Taylor and Nicholas Simmonds, Ofsted Inspectors, visited the school on 30 January 2018. I visited the school to gather additional evidence on 27 February 2018. Evidence from both visits contributed to the inspection.

Across the two visits, inspectors met with you, other school leaders, governors and a range of members of staff. Inspectors spoke to a large number of pupils, both formally and informally. They visited a range of lessons to observe learning and pupils' behaviour, accompanied by senior leaders. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and as they left school. Current pupils' work was scrutinised. The team considered documents about safeguarding, attendance, pupils' behaviour, current pupils' progress and governors' work. Inspectors took into account 339 responses from parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 165 responses to the staff survey and 461 responses to the pupil survey.