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Mr Rajinder Sandhu
Executive Principal
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Dear Mr Rajinder Sandhu

Short inspection of Guru Nanak Sikh Academy

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 2018 with Gill Bal and Susan Vale, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 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 have created a caring and supportive learning community where the shared values of 'service, humility, achievement, respect and equality' are understood and owned by all. In line with the aims of the school, you have created a happy and outward-looking community. Pupils are encouraged to fulfil their potential, intellectually, morally, physically, personally and socially. Since the last inspection, you have focused on raising the quality of leadership in the secondary phase. You have assembled a new team of senior leaders and have appointed an assistant principal to oversee boys' achievement.

The atmosphere around the school is calm and peaceful and pupils interact positively with each other. One pupil commented that 'the Sikh ethos and culture inspires pupils to be honest and hardworking'. Pupils are proud of their school and talk fondly of the sense of community and unity.

Pupils are keen to learn. They are compliant, self-motivated and they value education. This is evident in the rich discussions they engage in and their desire to understand new concepts and ideas. Pupils examine and challenge the ideas and views of others and help each other to learn.

The primary phase is a real strength of this all-through school. Pupils make very strong progress in mathematics, and progress in writing has improved significantly in recent years. You and your leadership team have rightly identified reading as a priority, and the development plans you have implemented are beginning to have a

tangible impact. The primary school is now a language-rich learning environment and there are many cross-curricular opportunities to develop language skills, including in science and mathematics.

During key stage 3 and key stage 4, pupils make strong progress in all subjects and make strong progress overall. However, the progress of boys is weaker than girls. You have recognised this and have implemented a strategy to improve boys' progress. Although the strategy is showing some signs of improvement, the school's own data indicates that girls continue to make stronger progress than boys.

Students in the sixth form are happy. They describe the sixth form as 'cohesive', 'friendly' and 'supportive'. Students speak warmly about the 'coaching for learning' initiative introduced after their mock examinations and the support they are given when applying to university. One student said that 'the sixth form is designed to make you into well-rounded people'; others described the wide range of enjoyable and beneficial extra-curricular opportunities that are on offer.

Although students in the sixth form are positive about their learning, outcomes in some subjects are not as strong as in others. You are rightly focusing on improving the quality of teaching in the sixth form to ensure that students make stronger progress and achieve the grades that they are capable of.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together with other leaders, you have created a culture of safeguarding in the school. You have appointed a member of staff to oversee safer recruitment, and all new appointments are subject to rigorous safeguarding checks. Pupils are safe, they feel safe and they are taught how to keep themselves safe. This view is shared by parents and staff. Pupils know who to go to if they have a concern. The safeguarding team is highly visible, and a team of anti-bullying ambassadors are in place to provide additional peer support if needed. Weekly personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education sessions focus on topics such as diversity, equality, tolerance and online safety. Pupils are respectful and courteous; they value themselves and others and, as a result, bullying is rare. When issues do occur, staff are swift to respond. Pupils expressed a desire for clearer and more timely communication from staff, a view echoed by parents.

The school is located on a busy industrial road. Members of staff are stationed at the front gates at the beginning and end of the school day to ensure that pupils are safe as they enter and leave the school site. Pupils value their presence and are aware that school leaders are seeking a solution to the traffic congestion issues that the school faces each morning and afternoon.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to look at what leaders are doing to improve progress in reading in key stage 2. In 2017, progress in writing was in line with the national average and progress in mathematics was significantly

above the national average. Conversely, progress in reading was significantly below the national average, as it was the year before.

- You have identified reading as a key priority for the school and have set about changing the culture. Reading has been given the highest priority in the primary school and the school is now a very language-rich learning environment. The governing body is aware that reading is a priority and spends appropriate time in meetings checking the strategies that leaders have put in place.
- Every classroom has a welcoming reading corner and volunteers have been recruited and trained to read with pupils. A newly formed group of 'rocket readers' in key stage 1 are developing strong reading skills, ensuring a solid foundation for key stage 2. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 can join the 'vipers' reading group to help them with vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval and summation.
- As a result of the decisive response by school leaders, current assessment information indicates that better progress is being made.
- The next key line of enquiry focused on outcomes for boys at key stage 4. Although progress overall at key stage 4 is above the national average, boys do not make as much progress as girls.
- You recognise the need to improve rates of progress for boys, particularly in humanities, modern foreign languages and design and technology, and you have put in place a focused plan. The plan is overseen by a newly appointed member of the leadership team. There have been a number of key changes since September 2017. The curriculum has been revised to ensure that it meets the needs of boys, with new topics incorporated into schemes of work specifically designed to engage boys. A plan to incentivise boys through a tightened rewards system has been implemented, along with various other intervention strategies targeting boys. Leaders and staff have started to monitor closely the engagement and progress of boys. Revised quality assurance forms include a section for leaders to comment specifically on boys' progress.
- Although the plan is comprehensive, leaders recognise that the changes put in place are not yet fully established and it is too soon to judge their full impact.
- The early signs are promising, and the progress of boys is improving. However, it continues to lag behind girls', and in modern foreign languages and humanities the gap remains wide. Rates of progress for boys and girls are more equal in Year 10.
- The third key line of enquiry focused on outcomes in the sixth form. Typically, students' progress in the sixth form is below the national average. We looked at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes in the sixth form.
- Inspectors noted that teaching does not always take account of individual students' needs. Although teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, lessons are too often pitched to the middle-ability students, with little support for the least able or appropriate challenge for the most able. Moreover, teachers do not systematically check students' understanding and therefore they are unable to target their support effectively.

- Leaders are addressing this issue and current assessment information indicates an improving picture. Although progress in some subjects remains below average in Year 13, current assessment information for Year 12 is significantly more positive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching routinely challenges students in the sixth form so that they make strong progress across all aspects of their study programmes
- the strategies put in place by leaders to improve outcomes for boys at GCSE are effective
- staff respond to concerns raised by pupils and parents in a timely manner.

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

Yours sincerely

Niall Gallagher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we met with you, your vice principal, senior leaders and two members of the governing body, including the chair. We met with a group of middle leaders and a group of newly qualified teachers. We spoke with pupils about their learning during the 11 lessons visited and looked at their books and folders. We met with groups of pupils from key stage 3 and the sixth form to talk about their views of the school and listened to key stage 2 pupils read. We evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies for keeping children safe, training, safeguarding checks and record keeping.