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Ms Aruna Sharma
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Dear Ms Sharma

Short inspection of Villiers High School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 2018 with Philippa Nunn and Sophie Kavanagh, 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You joined the school in September 2017 and have quickly established an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has many strengths. By the end of key stages 4 and 5, outcomes for most groups of pupils are significantly above the national average. For example, in 2017 pupils' progress in mathematics was in the top 2% of all schools in the country. Furthermore, over the last two years and in a wide range of subjects, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds made progress that is either in line with or significantly above that of other pupils nationally.

You have brought a new energy to the school. This is evidenced particularly through feedback from staff and pupils. From talking to staff, seeing them at work and evaluating the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, it is clear that their morale is high. Staff value the focus that has been placed on further improving their training and ensuring that they have a working environment where they are motivated and respected. Pupils at the school also talked about recent improvements, for example in behaviour and teachers having even higher expectations of them. Senior and middle leaders work together and complement each other well.

One of the challenges faced by the school is the high number of pupils who join the

school during the school year, often from another country. They feel very well supported and settle into the life of school quickly. This is because of the effective systems that are in place to help establish pupils' different strengths and needs, for example, in their ability to speak and write English.

You have had to make some challenging decisions on how best to use school resources. For example, a recent review of the languages on offer to pupils in Year 7 in September 2017, placed a focus on establishing which languages pupils wanted to learn. As a result, due to small numbers, the school decided that some languages could not be offered as a lesson on the 'formal' timetable. However, you offered to run these as enrichment activities during the school day. This upset a small number of parents and carers who were not happy with this decision.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, are well aware of the local risks that affect pupils at the school. In response to these risks, staff receive focused training, for example on child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. As a result, the school community is alert to any changes in a pupil's behaviour or attendance.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. For example, the school's 'strategic referral group' meet regularly and ensure that information about pupils is shared quickly so decisions about how to help pupils, including the school's most vulnerable, can be made quickly. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children meet statutory requirements.

Pupils feel safe in the school. They spoke about their learning, such as staying safe online and how to manage any negative influences from other people, particularly from outside of school. Pupils new to the school feel well supported in making new friends. Pupils also spoke about a recent multi-cultural evening that celebrated the range of faiths, beliefs and cultures of pupils who attend the school. This type of activity has helped to create an inclusive community where pupils feel safe in celebrating their individual differences. Pupils who spoke to inspectors and who replied to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils, feel that staff take any incidences of bullying seriously and typically respond to it effectively. The number of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's survey for parents was low. However, school surveys, for example relating to parents of pupils in Years 7 and 9, indicate that a high proportion of parents strongly agree that their children are safe and well looked after at the school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, one area we agreed to focus on was the school's work to improve outcomes for the most able pupils. This was an area for improvement from the last inspection. By the end of key stage 4 in 2017, this group of pupils made average progress compared to lower- and middle-ability pupils who made significantly above-average progress.
- Leaders at all levels have clearly prioritised further improving outcomes for the most able pupils. The training provided to staff to help them stretch and challenge this group

of pupils is making a difference. Observations of learning, including in the sixth form, showed evidence that the school's 'work like a scholar' approach and focus on improving the effectiveness of teacher questioning is helping the most able to think more deeply about their learning. For example, Year 8 pupils were showing confidence and deep understanding of the new concepts of hierarchy and status that they were learning when they were discussing the characters from 'Of mice and men'. In addition, reviewing work in a range of other subjects showed most-able pupils demonstrating substantial progress in developing their subject-specific knowledge and skills.

- Middle leaders are now more focused and skilled in tracking pupils' progress. They use the information they have to take responsibility for improving teaching in their own subject areas. There is clear evidence of strong leadership and management at all levels of the school. The school has also established additional 'out of the classroom' learning experiences for the most able. These include opportunities for girls to raise their aspirations alongside visits to universities and access to guest speakers for all pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they value these opportunities. Overall, the school's work to improve outcomes for the most able is consolidating to secure an even better curriculum experience for them. You recognise that there is still more to do to fully embed strategies such as 'work like a scholar'.
- The second area we agreed to evaluate was the school's effectiveness in managing exclusions, including the use of internal exclusion. This was because fixed-term exclusions, although decreasing over time, were just above the national average.
- When you started in September, one of the changes you made was to tighten up on expectations of pupils' behaviour. This was partly in response to what pupils told you that they would like to see improve. As a result, expectations about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable have been raised. This has resulted in the use of internal exclusion rather than any sharp rise in fixed-term exclusions. Observations showed that classrooms and corridors are calm and purposeful. Teachers predominantly teach with their classroom doors open. Pupils are typically polite and friendly, and their standard of uniform is excellent. Pupils reported that the school has become stricter since September.
- When pupils receive an internal exclusion, they are given appropriate work to do. Leaders analyse the use of internal exclusion to look for trends in different groups of pupils. There is a small group of pupils whose behaviour is more challenging and who have been given 'repeat' internal exclusions. Moving forward, leaders acknowledge that internal exclusions need to reduce. Leaders are exploring additional preventative strategies that could be used to help pupils, particularly those who have been excluded more than once, to improve their behaviour.
- Thirdly, we agreed to evaluate the achievement of pupils new to the school. This was because the school has a sizeable proportion of pupils who join the school at different points of the year, many of whom do not have any results from their Year 6 education.
- Leaders have a secure process for helping to decide on the 'starting point' (baseline) of pupils new to the school, particularly for those from another country. This helps leaders to monitor pupils' progress thoroughly. For example, leaders' analysis of 2017 outcomes for those who did not have any results from key stage 2 assessments, show that their progress matches or is better than that of their peers.
- Leaders have a very clear and appropriate package of support to help pupils new to the

school. This includes identifying pupils' level of skill in speaking, writing and reading English. Pupils new to the school were enthusiastic and proud to tell inspectors about how well supported they are, including having access to teaching resources such as dictionaries and new technology. They also wanted inspectors to know how the school found out about their individual strengths and interests. They are encouraged to attend clubs at the school. As a result, they form new friendships and improve in confidence quickly.

- Lastly, we agreed to look at outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4 in their optional subjects. This was because in 2017 pupils' overall progress in these subjects was in line with the national average.
- Leaders have identified the subjects in which pupils did not attain highly. These include business studies, classical civilisation, religious studies and design technology. Leaders faced some staffing challenges in one or two subjects, have put in place additional support for these subject areas and have focused on improving the quality of teaching. Observations of teaching and reviews of pupils' work are showing that in most cases improvements are evident. However, there are still some inconsistencies, supported by the school's assessment information, where further improvement is still needed, including for the most able pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue their work to further improve outcomes for the most able pupils, particularly in their optional subjects in key stage 4
- follow through with plans to help the small groups of pupils who have been excluded more than once to improve their behaviour, so that exclusions, particularly those that are internal, reduce over time.

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

Yours sincerely

Sam Hainey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with you and other senior leaders, staff, representatives from the governing body and the local authority
- visits to classrooms with senior leaders and reviewing a range of pupils' books in different subjects to evaluate their learning
- meetings with different groups of pupils
- evaluation of information provided by the school, including safeguarding records, exclusion data, case studies, the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress
- taking into account the views of parents, pupils and staff to Ofsted's questionnaires
- reviewing the school's own surveys of parental views of the school's work. The lead inspector also spoke to the representative of a parent by telephone.