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Ms Marie McMahon
Executive Principal
Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy
Lower City Road
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Dear Ms McMahon

Short inspection of Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy (OSCA)

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Louise Blackburn, 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.

You have created an inclusive and purposeful environment. OSCA is a welcoming school. Pupils enjoy their education and staff are proud of the school. They believe that there is a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for all pupils. Progress board members and governors are committed to the school, have a sound understanding of issues and concerns, and challenge and support leaders effectively.

You lead the school well, supported effectively by other senior and middle leaders. Leadership roles have recently been developed so that there is now an extended leadership team and key appointments have been made in subject areas.

You use the school's self-evaluation well and prioritise areas that require attention. There are new systems and actions in place to address those pupils' outcomes that are in need of improvement. You show commitment to raising standards through securing high-quality teaching and learning. However, you acknowledge that more time is needed to fully embed the changes so that they have a direct, positive effect on outcomes.

While some groups make strong progress, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils have performed less well in some subjects. You and your leaders know that the progress of those pupils needs to improve further, especially in science. While

you have action plans in place to tackle this issue, it is too early to see any impact on outcomes. The school's leaders are clear that there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupil groups make the progress that they are capable of.

At the previous inspection, leaders were charged with ensuring that teachers plan work that challenges the full range of pupils in each class. Teaching is now strong in most subjects and, as a result, the great majority of pupils are starting to make effective progress.

Pupils are polite and willing to talk with visitors. Pupils spoke positively about being part of the school community and about the support they receive from their teachers. One Year 8 pupil described being at OSCA as being part of 'one big family'.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and staff ensure pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils. The school has very well-established and effective practices to ensure that any concerns about pupils are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Training for all staff is regular, up to date and effective. Identification and reporting systems are robust and referrals made to external agencies are appropriate. Leaders and governors monitor safeguarding effectively and maintain a strong oversight.

All pupils that we spoke to during the inspection said that they feel safe in the school. They said that bullying is rare and that staff deal well with any incidents that happen. The curriculum includes regular teaching on how to stay safe, including from potential dangers that can arise when using the internet and social media platforms.

Inspection findings

- High expectations, impressive teacher knowledge and effective questioning challenge pupils. For example, the use of appropriate target language by the teacher in French in Year 9 enabled pupils to make strong progress because of their immersion in subject-specific language.
- School leaders have ensured that high-quality training has improved teaching and learning and they have a target for all lessons to be at least good.
- Where teachers plan to a high level, they meet the needs of most groups of pupils, and teaching and learning are most effective. For example, lessons are effectively planned in English and foreign languages. Pupils' books generally show evidence of good progress over time.
- The progress made by the most able pupils is inconsistent. The school's internal data reflects that most-able pupils are not improving at the same rate as others. This is an area that the school is continuing to work on. Some strategies that

have been introduced are starting to have an effect, but the full impact on pupils' progress has not yet been realised.

- Standards in science are lower than in other subject areas. The school has started to make improvements. A new subject leader was appointed at the start of the academic year. Two leading practitioners have taken up post recently.
- Regular quality assurance is providing the department with clear guidance on their next steps to improve. Strategies for raising achievement for girls have been incorporated into the science curriculum and girls' science clubs are proving popular with pupils.
- Because of strong role models, attitudes and planned learning that is related to real-life situations, science lessons have, according to pupils, become more interesting and relevant. All science teachers observed during the inspection were using different levels of challenge as part of their success criteria.
- All pupils, when asked by inspectors, said that science teaching had much improved since September 2017. Senior leaders have worked hard to bring about improvements, especially in the quality of teaching and resources, although provision is not yet as strong as that of other subjects.
- The school receives a high level of pupil premium funding because almost half of the school's pupils are disadvantaged. All teachers are aware of who the disadvantaged pupils in their classes are. Targeted questioning is a feature within lessons, with full participation of disadvantaged pupils in those lessons being an expectation.
- Subject areas have separate strategies for raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. While these are effective, they are not all included in the pupil premium strategy statement, as seen on the school's website, or widely shared across all subjects within the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve the progress and attainment of the most able pupils are developed across all key stages
- investment and improvements in science continue so that all pupils can benefit by making strong progress in line with other subject areas
- strategies for disadvantaged pupils that are successful in some subject areas are in place across other areas of the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

David Buckle
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, senior and middle leaders, members of the progress board and the governing body, and with pupils both formally and informally. We made visits to lessons, some of which were accompanied by senior leaders. Pupils' work in books was evaluated and we talked to pupils about their learning. The results of inspection surveys regarding the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered. We evaluated school documents, including information about pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the school's self-evaluation and development plan.