

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



28 June 2018

Mrs Jane Walton  
Headteacher  
Hasting Hill Academy  
Tilbury Road  
Sunderland  
Tyne and Wear  
SR3 4LY

Dear Mrs Walton

### **Short inspection of Hasting Hill Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 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. Since your appointment, you have been steadfast in your determination to eradicate any underperformance and root out weaknesses that could compromise the progress pupils make in their learning. Working alongside colleagues from the academy trust, you have established a skilled and hardworking team of senior leaders. The way in which leaders have responded to the recent unavoidable, but temporary, absence of two senior leaders is testament to the way in which leadership responsibility is shared. You have been supported well by the skilled and effective governing body, working in partnership with trustees of the academy trust. Together, they have been supportive yet challenging, very effectively setting the strategic direction of the school. The school is well placed to continue on its journey of change, improvement and success.

You have ensured that the school has benefited from an outward-facing approach. You have made good use of support and training from both the local authority and colleagues from the trust. Staff speak positively about the quality and range of the many available training opportunities. You have close ties with a number of other schools to ensure that teachers have the chance to share ideas and agree on the accuracy of assessments with colleagues. Many staff have been part of the school team during its journey of substantial improvement over recent years. As the school has blossomed, they are rightly proud of their roles and delighted with the opportunities pupils now have to fulfil their true potential.

You have been resolute in your determination to improve the quality of teaching,

which in turn has allowed pupils to be successful learners. Over the past two years, pupils have achieved very well. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has exceeded that found nationally at the end of Year 6. The rates of progress pupils make in their learning across key stage 2 have also been above those found nationally, including for disadvantaged pupils. Any differences in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils have been eradicated. However, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher standards of attainment has been just below average in reading and mathematics in the last two years. You acknowledge that improving this remains a key priority for the school.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. As a result of consistently good teaching, the achievement of pupils has continued to improve, including in Years 3 and 4. Analysis of the school's records of the monitoring of teaching clearly shows that your evaluations of its quality are detailed, accurate and robust. There is no evidence that the pace of learning remains an issue for the school. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' rates of progress in every year group are good, with most pupils on track to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of the year. You are also clear about the school's next steps. A review of the way in which the school's curriculum is planned and assessed is underway. Working alongside the child and family liaison officer you are determined to improve pupils' rates of attendance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governor safeguarding training is up to date and recorded diligently, including dates for the next round of training. The school ensures that any staff who miss key training are provided with other opportunities to access it. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their attendance at a recent safety carousel event, and were able to explain how to cross the road safely. They said that behaviour in school is good and improving. Pupils have full trust in their teachers and teaching assistants, who look after them, and report feeling safe all of the time.

All staff are vigilant and quick to raise any issue or concern. The thorough approach of the school's systems manager ensures that records and documents are of high quality. An extensive and detailed online system ensures that absolutely nothing is missed that could compromise pupils' safety and well-being. Detailed chronologies of incidents and concerns enable leaders to scrutinise in detail all aspects of pupils' welfare. Work undertaken by the child and family liaison officer is having a significantly positive effect on pupils' well-being and attendance. She is skilled in supporting vulnerable pupils and families, signposting the way to additional support from other agencies.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils' personal development, well-being and safety are real strengths of the school. The sterling work undertaken by the child and family liaison officer has been crucial in securing support for a number of vulnerable pupils and their families. This includes addressing any poor attendance and providing access to support from a range of other agencies. You have already implemented strategies to improve the school's below-average attendance rates and these have been partially successful. However, there is further work to do to ensure that attendance at least matches the national averages. Some parents take their children on unauthorised holidays during term time and this often hampers your efforts.
- Pupils' enjoyment in their learning is obvious. They display exemplary attitudes in lessons, have a huge desire to succeed and work diligently simply because they are motivated to do their best. They show skills in working collaboratively, and are becoming adept in assessing their own work and occasionally that of their peers. Classrooms are engaging, bright and attractive. Displays support pupils' learning very well. For example, in Year 6 the mathematics display encourages pupils to create algebraic formulae using given information. Pupils' behaviour is very good both around school and in lessons. Pupils were adamant that any bullying has been eradicated. They are proud to represent the school as head boy or girl, a prefect, a 'friendship fixer' or as part of the school council. They are equally proud of their recent successes in sporting events and in winning a national singing competition. They are knowledgeable about British values, and spoke enthusiastically about meeting and questioning their local Member of Parliament, who made a recent visit to school.
- As a result of good teaching, an exciting and well-resourced learning environment and strong leadership, from their low starting points, children make a good start in their learning in the early years. Children are happy, independent and curious. During the inspection, children enthusiastically joined in with the 'pirate captain' – a member of staff – to sing pirate songs as they sailed the ocean. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen every year for three years and inspection evidence indicates that the proportion is set to rise again this year. An invigorated approach to the teaching of phonics has paid dividends. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen this year. Pupils make good progress across key stage 1, with an above-average proportion achieving greater depth by the end of Year 2. You acknowledge that in key stage 2 pupils' work is not consistently challenging, especially for the most able pupils. As a result, too few achieve the higher standards by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics. You agree that increasing the proportion of pupils achieving this higher standard is an important next step.
- The leadership team has had significant success in overseeing curriculum planning and teaching in English, science and mathematics. Leaders know their subjects well and regularly and robustly monitor pupils' work in books. They carefully evaluate teaching in lessons and scrutinise assessment information. As a result, they have a very clear picture of the strengths and areas to improve in teaching and learning across the school in these core subjects. You acknowledge

that further work is required in order to improve the quality of the school's wider curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the topic-based approach that results from a challenge or question, usually linked to history or geography. Trips and visits are planned accordingly, such as to the Roman fort at Vindolanda or the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. Although all areas of the curriculum are covered over a two-year rolling programme, pupils' subject-specific skills in foundation and creative subjects are not currently assessed or tracked. As a result, you acknowledge that their progress in different subjects across the curriculum cannot be measured.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- systems to assess and track subject-specific skills in foundation and creative subjects are developed
- in key stage 2, pupils' work is consistently challenging, especially for the most able, and results in an increased proportion achieving the higher standards by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics
- current strategies to improve attendance are reviewed and consolidated so that attendance at least matches, or is better than, that found nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Scott  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. I also met with the school systems manager and child and family liaison officer. I held a meeting with two governors, including the chair of the governing body and a trustee, and met with the chief executive officer of the trust. Alongside you, I visited lessons in each key stage and reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks in lessons. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school and listened to two pupils from Year 1 read. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime. A range of documents was considered relating to safeguarding. I examined the school development plan, the school's monitoring of its own performance and its assessment and tracking of current pupils' progress and attainment. I scrutinised pupils' achievement in the 2016 and 2017 statutory assessments. I was unable to review the six responses to Parent View, but did

scrutinise the 80 responses to the school's own questionnaire completed in April 2018. I also reviewed the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 14 responses to the pupil questionnaire. In addition, I scrutinised the school's website.