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Mr Gary Lobbett
Principal
Alec Reed Academy
Bengarth Road
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Dear Mr Lobbett

Short inspection of Alec Reed Academy

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2018 with Ofsted Inspectors James Whiting and Kanwaljit Singh, 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.

Improvements have been made in the areas identified at the previous inspection. Children's learning in the early years is particularly strong. A significant improvement is the outdoor area, which is now well resourced and is enabling children to learn well. There has been some improvement in students' results at A level and these are now in line with vocational subjects. The proportion of students studying A levels has increased and you and your leaders are continuing to focus on improving students' achievement further in the sixth form.

Learning in the early years and primary phases is a particular strength of the school. The buzz of activity, both inside the classrooms and in the outdoor area, reflects children's high levels of engagement. During the inspection, we saw many examples of pupils responding very well to the high expectations of their teachers.

The school is at the heart of its community. You and your leaders are excellent role models for showing the greatest care for all pupils in the school. The inclusive nature of the school is reflected in the way pupils in all phases respond to the opportunities available. Pupils appreciate the support they receive from staff and from their peers. Pupils told us about the sense of togetherness and one pupil said, 'Teachers make sure no one is left behind.'

The strong sense of being an inclusive school is demonstrated further in the way pupils show respect for each other. They also show great respect for the young people who attend the special school which is located in the school building and who use the dining facilities. This results in a united school community where the core values of kindness, respect and honesty are shown in all aspects of school life.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. You ensure that your arrangements for safeguarding are audited and you have responded appropriately to two recommendations. Procedures in place for recruiting staff meet statutory requirements and all pre-employment checks are rigorously followed. The single central record of staff suitability checks is well maintained.

The school has effective systems for tracking safeguarding concerns and referrals. Leaders ensure that all cases are followed up swiftly and effectively. Relationships with local partners, for example the Somali advice bureau, are strong and enable the school to work well with families represented in the local community. The school is persistent in tackling cases with a range of agencies, with a clear focus on keeping children safe. You ensure that training for staff and governors is of high quality. This has included training on female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. During our meetings with staff, they demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibility in keeping pupils safe and well cared for.

Pupils told us that they feel safe and that staff look after them well. As one pupil said, 'Everyone looks out for each other.' This view was shared by many. Pupils are appreciative of the provision of counsellors and the support for their mental well-being.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed four key lines of enquiry. The first key focus looked at how well leaders and governors ensure that pupils are safe and behave well. It also looked at the school's use of exclusions. This was because the proportion of permanent exclusions over the past two years was above average. Furthermore, a high proportion of pupils left the school during key stage 4 during 2016 and 2017.
- We found that, both inside the classroom and around the school, pupils behave well. Pupils show great respect for adults and their peers. There are clear systems in place for behaviour and these are implemented consistently. Pupils reported that bullying is very rare and, when it occurs, it is dealt with well.
- You, together with governors, make sure that the exclusion policy is implemented effectively. You are determined to ensure that learning is not affected by disruptive behaviour and that the school is a safe community for all pupils.
- Professional judgement has been used appropriately by you, supported by governors, when decisions have been made to implement the exclusion policy.

The school is committed to ensuring that learning is not affected by any disruptive behaviour and that a safe community is maintained.

- A specialist team to support pupils' emotional and social well-being provides effective support for pupils' needs. We looked at the details of the pupils who left the school in the middle of the school year. We were satisfied that the school works closely with families and that all the appropriate procedures are followed by the school when pupils leave during the year. We also looked at attendance. Leaders agreed that reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, particularly the disadvantaged pupils, is an ongoing area for improvement.
- Our second line of enquiry focused on disadvantaged pupils, including the most able. This was because, for two years, attainment and progress measures at the end of key stage 4 were below average for this group of pupils.
- High expectations are set across the school for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. In visits to lessons with leaders, in looking at pupils' work and in evaluating the school's assessment information, we found the attainment gap between disadvantaged and other pupils has reduced at key stage 4. From looking at pupils' work in key stages 3 and 4, there was evidence of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, making strong progress in subjects across the curriculum. Your progress tracking information for pupils in Year 11 gives indication of a significant improvement compared with previous years. Disadvantaged students in the sixth form are currently attaining above or in line with other students and, overall, this is good attainment.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive personalised support for learning from their teachers and this is having a positive effect on their progress over time. Pupils from different year groups across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, told us about the wide range of support they receive from adults at school. They spoke positively about additional teaching during lunchtimes, as well as the calm atmosphere in lessons, where they said the teachers always helps them to learn. Pupils also said how much they appreciate the support from their peers and considered this to be a very good way of teaching others.
- Although the work in pupils' book shows that they make good progress overall and achieve well, we saw examples where this is not always the case. Occasionally, teachers do not identify misconceptions in pupils' learning consistently well in order to help them make even better progress. When looking at pupils' work, there was agreement that there are a small number of cases where work seen indicated that the school was not identifying concerns and responding promptly. It was not always clear how some disadvantaged pupils improve their work.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities was the focus of our third line of enquiry. This is because the progress of these pupils in key stage 4 was significantly lower than that of others in 2017.
- Middle and senior leaders are determined to continually improve the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Teachers clearly identify individual pupils' needs effectively. As a team, curriculum leaders closely track pupils'

progress and this has a positive effect on their achievements.

- In our joint observations with leaders, we agreed that teachers set high expectations for pupils through the delivery of a challenging curriculum in most subjects. We found that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported to fully access activities in lessons. They are making good progress. We saw many examples of the good support offered by teaching assistants.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities speak very positively about their learning and told that they receive a lot of support from their teachers. They equally feel that their peers are very supportive.
- Our final line of enquiry focused on how the broader curriculum is contributing to the progress in reading, writing and mathematics of children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2. This was because writing outcomes have been strong.
- Our visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and evaluation of assessment information support leaders' assertions that pupils make strong progress in their learning throughout the primary phase.
- The proportion of children attaining standards that are above average at the end of Reception Year is high. The curriculum has improved significantly from the last inspection. A wide range of stimulating activities enable children to enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- We found that teaching and learning in the primary phase are strong. The development of vocabulary skills is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and other curriculum subjects. A strong focus on phonics from the outset promotes high achievement across year groups. Teachers' strong questioning skills, explanations of tasks and high expectations ensure that pupils of all abilities receive challenging work. We saw that pupils take pride in their work and are engaged in their learning across the curriculum. They are well supported to develop their independence skills, particularly in correcting their own work and using their 'toolkits' for their writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the rates of persistent absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, reduce
- teachers consistently check pupils' misconceptions, particularly the disadvantaged, while maintaining high expectations.

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

Janice Howkins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, senior and middle leaders, and spoke with a governor to discuss aspects of the school's work. We also met with the leader responsible for pupil premium funding and with a representative of the local authority. Joint visits to lessons were made with senior leaders and we reviewed pupils' work in lessons. We held formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils. We took account of 20 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. We considered the views of 50 members of staff who responded to the staff survey. We scrutinised the school's documentation, including information related to pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, safeguarding checks and information about attendance and exclusions.