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Mrs Julie Hazeldine
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Dear Mrs Hazeldine

Short inspection of Flixton Girls School

Following my visit to the school on 18 July 2018 with Fiona Burke-Jackson, Ofsted Inspector, 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 March 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 other leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and of aspects where variability remains. The actions that you have taken since the last inspection have put right the areas for improvement noted at that time. As a result, you have improved the standard of education provided in these aspects and demonstrated the capacity of school leaders to manage the school effectively.

You and other leaders have created a positive learning community. Pupils enjoy school and most attend regularly. Their attendance, overall, is in line with that of others nationally. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils tackle key aspects of fundamental British values, for example by exploring and discussing contemporary issues in depth and with sensitivity. As a result, pupils say that difference is recognised and valued and that they enjoy positive relationships with one another. They say that bullying is infrequent, and that it is typically dealt with effectively.

Your plans to support pupils in their transition to and from the school ensure that these changes do not disrupt the standard of their education. Most parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, expressed positive views

about their children's smooth transition from primary school to Year 7. In addition, all of the pupils who have left the school in recent years have moved on to places in education, training and employment. As a result, the school is a popular choice with parents when deciding upon their children's secondary education.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are typically positive. They value their education and they understand how to learn well. Pupils appreciate the regularly good quality of teaching and are usually resilient when teaching does not meet this standard. You and other leaders have worked with precision to identify and reduce the impact of any instances of weak teaching, including those which have arisen through staff absence. You typically rectify these effectively. Teachers, including those who are new to the school or are recently qualified, value the quality of training that you provide. They recognise the positive impact that it has had on developing their teaching. As a result, most pupils learn effectively across a broad range of subjects.

Most pupils make the progress that they should across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils who have low starting points make better progress than others nationally. In 2017, examination results showed that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities made less progress than others. You and other leaders, including governors, have taken effective action to improve the progress of these pupils. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrated that the differences are diminishing.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and other leaders keep pupils safe in relation to risks that they might encounter. For example, you have ensured that staff and pupils are well informed about the risks that gang activity and child sexual exploitation pose. Staff are also trained to protect pupils from the risks of extremism. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from potential dangers that can arise when using the internet, and they are further protected by the internet filtering system used by the school. Inspectors checked the school site and found that it is secure.

Safeguarding records are detailed and well maintained. Leaders act swiftly and effectively when required. Inspectors checked referrals and found that they are followed up and recorded effectively. Leaders' checking to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils who are absent from school is systematic. Leaders have introduced robust systems to manage effectively the safety of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision. As a result, pupils and staff agree that pupils are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The first area that we considered was whether school leaders manage pupils' conduct effectively. We found that they do. Pupils have a clear understanding

of your high expectations and support them. Accordingly, the pupils with whom we spoke described behaviour, around school and in lessons, as generally good. Their positive view matched that of the parents and staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys. Pupils said that, in those cases where behaviour is less good, incidents are seldom serious, and that staff notice and act upon any issues that arise effectively.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. As a result, their work is typically completed carefully and precisely. Teachers create a positive learning environment in lessons and pupils' good habits have a positive impact on their good conduct. Occasionally the work set by teachers does not match the needs of some pupils and, as a result, a few lose concentration. However, generally they do not disturb others and soon apply themselves to their learning again. Even when work does not meet their needs, most pupils are resilient and maintain good attitudes to learning.
- Our second focus area was to investigate whether leaders, including governors, manage the Year 7 catch up and the pupil premium funding effectively. We found that the Year 7 catch up premium is used well, especially when supporting pupils to improve and sustain good levels of literacy. Staff use the information provided by primary schools and other assessment information systematically and effectively. They tailor pupils' learning to focus on their weaker aspects. As a result, these pupils catch up and keep up, so their levels of reading, writing, and speaking and listening match those of other pupils.
- You and other leaders have made effective use of pupil premium funding. For example, you ensured that every disadvantaged pupil who completed Year 11 in 2017 moved on to next steps in education and training. This achievement has been sustained this year. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have a post-16 offer which matches their needs and interests. Disadvantaged pupils engage in all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular opportunities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is improving, although it is currently lower than average. Pupils, overall, are making better progress across a range of subjects than previously. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. The progress of disadvantaged pupils does not match that of other pupils nationally. However, differences between their progress and that of other pupils nationally and in the school are diminishing.
- The next area that we investigated was whether school leaders ensure that teachers routinely set pupils, including the most able pupils, work that matches their ability. We found that pupils, overall, make the progress that they should. Pupils with low starting points generally make strong progress, outperforming others nationally. You accurately say that this is currently a strength of the school.
- You and other leaders have focused on improving the progress of the most able pupils this year. You have targeted the work that these pupils are set by teachers, especially in English and mathematics in key stage 4, to ensure that it is consistently challenging. Pupils' current work demonstrates that more of them are making stronger progress. For example, the proportion of these pupils

who attained the highest grades in recent assessments in English and mathematics is significantly greater than that of others with similar starting points previously. You plan next to embed these successes securely across other subjects and to improve the progress of pupils with average starting points. Inspectors agreed with your findings. Pupils generally make good progress, including in English and mathematics, because the work they are set usually matches their ability and needs. However, occasionally pupils, including those with average and high starting points, are not set challenging enough work, particularly in subjects other than mathematics and English.

- The final area that we considered was whether leaders ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities consistently make the progress that they should. We found that your steps to strengthen the leadership of this area have been effective. As a result, the parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, were positive about the support the school provides for their children. Leaders routinely refine pupils' support plans, especially those who have an education, health and care plan, so that the actions they take match pupils' requirements closely. Pupils with in-school support plans are also well known and supported, especially by the special educational needs department, which is a strength of the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities typically enjoy and feel secure in school. Consequently, they attend regularly. The attendance of these pupils is in line with that of other pupils nationally. The special educational needs department is effective in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in their transition to and from the school. Special educational needs staff visit primary schools and use the information provided by them to ensure that staff know pupils well when they join the school and have secured appropriate next steps in education and training for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities when they leave. The special educational needs coordinator and other staff have led training events for teachers, which has provided greater consistency in the quality of teaching for these pupils. Overall, this has been effective, so pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make better progress than previously. However, some variability remains because some teachers have acted upon the training that they have received more effectively than others.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils continue to improve, so that they match those of other pupils nationally
- teachers continue to improve pupils' progress, especially that of middle-ability pupils and the most able, by consistently setting them work which challenges them
- teachers act upon the good training that they receive to ensure that the work they set consistently challenges and supports the learning of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Ruddy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings took place with you, other school leaders and governors. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views on a variety of issues including safeguarding, teaching and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. We examined a range of the school's documentation such as self-evaluation, the improvement plan, assessment information, attendance and behaviour records, special educational needs and/or disability plans and safeguarding information. We considered 79 responses to the Ofsted online parents' questionnaire, Parent View, 52 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility and 31 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire. We conducted learning walks across a range of subjects and year groups. We scrutinised the work in a sample of pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis together with school leaders.