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Mrs Toni Oxton-Grant
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Oxton-Grant

Short inspection of Crosby High School

Following my visit to the school on 11 September 2018 with Mark Quinn HMI, 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 lead a welcoming school and you ensure that pupils are at the heart of everything the school does. The school has a 'can do' attitude and pupils also commit to your vision for success as they embrace the 'I can...' statements used in lessons. Pupils are polite, friendly and humorous and are very secure and happy in their school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their conduct throughout the inspection was good.

The school is a safe, pleasant and well-maintained environment. You have developed new spaces for learning and have been very adaptable in order to accommodate new pupils at the request of the local authority. You are responding effectively to the changing nature of the needs of pupils joining your school and you play an important role in the local authority's offer for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You are engaged with other local schools and collaborate effectively in order to support one another.

Pupils say that they like coming to school and trust the adults in the school to care for them. They enjoy a wide range of subjects and say that their teachers challenge them to do their best. Pupils can talk about British values and other peoples' beliefs which they have learned about in their lessons and in assemblies. They enjoy lots of other aspects of school life, such as singing in the choir, residential holidays and

work experience opportunities.

The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which successfully captures their interests. You and other leaders are outward-looking. You seek opportunities to improve the pupils' quality of education by drawing on expertise and through collaboration with others. Governors have supported you well in these initiatives and their commitment to pupils in the school extends beyond their time at school as governors endeavour to learn about pupils' destinations in adult life.

You place a high value on supporting pupils' social and emotional development and have identified the key qualities that pupils need to develop social skills, resilience and independent thinking. As a result of this, you are preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education and for adult life. You consider the needs of individual pupils and offer alternative provision where appropriate. You then monitor this effectively.

Parents are very positive about the school. They feel that their children are safe in the school and say that staff deal with any problems. Parents find communication with staff is easy and that there is 'always someone to talk to'. They say that staff nurture pupils and help them develop independence. Parents appreciate the changes in the choice of subjects and value the ambitions that staff instil in their children. Parents report that staff prepare pupils 'really well' for the next stage of their education and adult life.

You, other leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of education in the school. Processes for evaluating the quality of education are thorough and detailed and you incorporate the views of others to inform your understanding of the school. You and the assistant headteacher have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and have ensured that teaching continues to improve. Teachers plan work to raise pupils' aspirations and work with them to ensure that they understand how to make their work better. Teachers typically provide sufficient challenge to enable pupils to make progress. However, in a small number of cases, particularly for less able pupils, teachers do not set work that is well matched to pupils' learning needs. As a consequence, pupils are either too reliant on adults' support or cannot successfully complete the tasks they have been set.

The school has faced a series of financial pressures in recent years. It is a credit to school leaders that they have continued to improve standards in the school while staff numbers have been reduced. This has been achieved by working closely with governors and by securing the commitment of the whole staff team.

You focus effectively on improving the quality of education that the pupils in the school receive and you have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You have made changes so that pupils are better informed about what they need to do to achieve their best. This is enabling pupils to be more involved with their learning. You have recently restructured your leadership team and middle leaders have some new areas of responsibility. They now monitor their

areas of responsibility more effectively and so have a better understanding of the quality of education in the school and how to support colleagues in making improvements. However, at this point, there is a lack of clear systems to enable the sharing of information among the leadership team.

Pupils typically make good progress in the school and achieve a broad range of accreditations and qualifications by the time they leave school. However, a number of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 did not reach the standards that leaders expected of them in mathematics last year. You have promptly set to work to resolve this dip and have lost no time in identifying a range of interventions to help these pupils catch up. These changes are already in place and although it is too early to evaluate their impact, staff are supportive of this approach.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, maintaining the strong safeguarding culture of the school and adapting to the changing demands of caring for vulnerable young people. The school's single central record is compliant and effective safer recruitment procedures are in place.

The designated governor for safeguarding is actively involved in the school. Governors have a clear awareness of their duties in relation to safeguarding. Members of staff are well trained and know exactly what to do if they have a safeguarding concern.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and trust the adults that work with them. Pupils know how to stay safe and opportunities to teach pupils about keeping themselves safe are an integral part of the curriculum. Exclusions are reducing and those that occur are well managed and follow appropriate procedures. There are risk assessments for transport arrangements and appropriate actions are taken to mitigate identified risks. Leaders make sure that thorough checks are carried out on the quality of safety and education at any alternative provision settings.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these explored pupils' understanding of what they had to do to achieve their best, and considered whether they were being challenged enough to achieve as well as they could. In most cases, pupils have high aims and they are provided with a good level of challenge. As a result, these pupils make good progress and are well prepared for the next stages of their education, employment or training. However, in a small number of cases, learning activities are not well matched to pupils' ability. This is particularly the case for less able pupils, who are sometimes over-reliant on adult help to complete tasks successfully.
- This line of enquiry also considered how effectively teachers help pupils to understand what they need to do to achieve good outcomes. There is a clear system followed in school which involves teachers, support staff and pupils. This ensures that everyone is clear about what pupils are trying to achieve.

- Another key line of enquiry related to the school's curriculum and focused on how well the curriculum meets the interests and needs of the pupils in the school. You have ensured that the curriculum in the school is broad and balanced and inspires pupils to engage with learning. The work you have led in this area, ably supported by senior and middle leaders, has been very effective. As a result, the diverse range of pupils' strengths and needs are well served by the curriculum. For example, you have altered the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop essential social skills, become more resilient and acquire crucial life skills to enable them to live happy and fulfilling adult lives.
- The curriculum is delivered according to the specific needs of pupils to give all pupils the best chance of achieving success. Pupils whose needs are most complex are taught by one teacher for the majority of the time within a single class base whereas other pupils are taught by subject specialist teachers.
- You and your leadership team have given a lot of careful thought to the curriculum offered, with a focus on accreditations and qualifications offered by the school. Leaders have researched the range of options available and consulted local providers of post-16 education in order to inform decisions. The changes you have made to broaden the range of accreditations and qualifications that pupils can achieve at the school mean that pupils are well prepared to move on in their education, employment or training when they leave Crosby High School.
- The final key line of enquiry looked at the impact being made by middle leaders in the school, including how effectively they oversee their areas of responsibility. They now use different strategies to monitor their areas of responsibility including reviewing teachers' planning, observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and tracking pupils' progress data. This gives them a clear understanding of the quality of education in their area and allows them to plan accurately the next steps needed to secure further improvements.
- Middle leaders have led the development of the key stage 3 curriculum so that it is now more responsive to the strengths and needs of pupils entering the school. They have also embraced additional new areas of responsibility and are making a positive contribution to the improving the quality of education in the school. However, systems for sharing critical information across the leadership team are not currently clear.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have a full understanding of pupils' needs so that learning in all subjects is closely matched to pupils' ability, particularly for pupils of lower ability
- the recent dip in outcomes in mathematics is successfully addressed so that pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics improves
- systems for sharing important information across the leadership team are clear and are implemented effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Hanbury
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the assistant headteacher, middle leaders, governors, parents, pupils and the school's improvement consultant. I also had a telephone conversation with another school improvement partner. Inspectors looked at the school's website and scrutinised a range of documentation and records, including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school's development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, pupil-progress reports and safeguarding documentation, including the school's single central record. Inspectors observed lessons, some with you and the assistant headteacher, conducted learning walks and scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks. I considered 12 responses to Parent View and 11 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.