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Mr Joe Docherty
Principal
Oasis Academy Brightstowe
Penpole Lane
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Dear Mr Docherty

Short inspection of Oasis Academy Brightstowe

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 2018 with Malcolm Davison, 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 January 2015.

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 in October 2015, you have improved the culture and ethos of the school. You listened to staff and pupils and recognised that there was disquiet about low-level disruption in lessons. You made significant strategic changes to the management of behaviour. Teachers apply these consistently so pupils are aware of expectations. Now, the school is an orderly place where learning takes place effectively. As a result, pupils are making better progress and their combined results are closer to the national average at the end of Year 11. There is also a greater stability of staffing. With the support of the multi-academy trust (MAT), you are able to provide specific and targeted support to colleagues. This, in turn, adds value to the education received by pupils.

Pupils engage well with the many extra-curricular activities offered. These add to their preparation for life beyond school. Leaders link well with local businesses and colleges. Pupils feel well-prepared for their next steps through work experience and presentations from companies and educational establishments. Pupils are ambitious for their own futures and have high aspirations as a result. Pupils feel safe and well supported emotionally and academically. As one parent commented: 'My children are very happy at the school. The teaching, leadership and pastoral staff all seem motivated and engaged in seeing the students grow in all areas of life, not just academic achievement.'

School leaders work hard to engage with parents. The MAT has an academy council made up of parents and community members. The councillors provide a good sounding board for decisions made with regard to the needs of the locality. There are many ways that leaders work alongside parents to ensure that pupils benefit from parental as well as school support. These include cooking evening meals and using local facilities where parents can attend in less formal group settings and learn about their children's needs. This has improved attendance and behaviour, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The principal has developed a culture that advocates personal safety and well-being for all pupils and staff. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns. School leaders work well with a range of agencies. Similarly, leaders work sensitively with parents and monitor and support pupils and families. Staff receive training on the latest guidance from the Department for Education in how to keep children safe. All aspects of recruitment checks are stringent. Although there is a comprehensive curriculum for teaching pupils how to stay safe, some of the messages are not fully understood by pupils yet.

Inspection findings

- We discussed the effectiveness of changes to the teaching of English, as progress had not been as good in this subject as other core areas of the curriculum. You mentioned that there had been many unexpected staffing changes in 2016 and this had been an unsettling time for the department. In the two years subsequently, there has been a review of the curriculum which has heightened expectations in English teaching. As a result, pupils from Year 7 onwards are reading more challenging texts. In addition, younger pupils learn correct grammar, spelling and punctuation regularly so that their basic skills in literacy are more secure. As we looked at learning, it was evident that pupils of different ages are enjoying English and coping with the work set. Older pupils are writing creatively and responsively to the demands of the end-of-key-stage-4 test questions. Sometimes, older pupils are not as conscientious about correct grammar, especially basic punctuation, as the younger pupils. The teaching has not been as thorough for these pupils. Also, pupils with lower ability in Years 10 and 11 do not get sufficient support and structure with their work, which impedes their progress.
- Although you expect teachers to note correct grammar and punctuation in every subject, there is little evidence of this in books currently. You agreed that with the new specifications at GCSE and the greater demands on pupils' correct spelling, grammar and punctuation, this is a necessary next step for the school. Some pupils are not yet considering the presentation and correctness of their work. Equally, in the wider curriculum, teachers are not enforcing these expectations and so there are weaknesses in extended writing in the full range of subjects.
- Next, we looked at the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in relation to other pupils in the school and nationally. This is an area that has been

strategically led by the deputy principal. Since his appointment in January 2018, he has channelled his passion and drive to ensure that these pupils attend school, behave well and make good progress. This is securing many positive outcomes. In a short space of time, effective work with disadvantaged pupils has reduced their exclusions, which were significantly higher than the exclusions of other pupils in the school in September 2017. By July 2018, exclusions had decreased overall and there was no difference between the number of exclusions of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. As a result of better attendance and higher aspirations, disadvantaged pupils are working confidently and as well as other pupils in the school in the majority of subjects.

- Over time, boys have not made such good progress as girls in English, science and other foundation subjects. You have recognised this and there is a strategic plan in place to amend this. Actions began in September and there is evidence already that they are beginning to pay dividends. When looking at learning, recent work shows engagement and enjoyment in English, science and other subjects. In English, in particular, pupils are reading texts which are of more interest to boys. This has improved boys' commitment to studying literature. Boys are able to articulate their learning when asked and many have high expectations of themselves with regard to their post-16 studies. You are reviewing the curriculum offer for boys of lower ability in ways that will support more different and varied careers.
- Finally, we looked at the low attendance and high persistent absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. As pupils are behaving in better ways, so their attendance has increased. School leaders are using a tracking system, devised by the MAT, which provides information more swiftly with regard to pupils' absence. As a result, staff responses are quicker. Staff make calls to homes immediately to make sure the non-attendance is valid. Attendance is now much closer to the national average. The persistent absence of pupils, though reduced since last year, is still too high. However, the improvement in monitoring absence has enabled staff to identify key groups which need more focus, in particular girls overall and some in Year 10.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- English outcomes continue to improve and at a quicker pace
- pupils embed their literacy skills in the wider curriculum
- persistent absence is reduced, especially for girls, so that it is at least in line with the national average.

I am copying this letter to the regional director and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bristol City of. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I and the Ofsted inspector met with you, senior leaders, the regional director and the national secondary lead of the trust, and governors. We spoke formally with groups of pupils. We visited lessons in English, mathematics, science and some foundation subjects. We looked at the quality of work in pupils' exercise books and considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding. We took into account 39 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 37 comments written by parents, the 29 staff responses and the 63 pupil ones.