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Mr D Kenny
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Kenny

Short inspection of Park View Academy

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since joining the school as headteacher in September 2018, you have successfully shared your vision with staff, pupils and their families. You place great emphasis on pupils' aspirations and you work effectively with other leaders to ensure that pupils make good progress and are ambitious for the future. Your chief executive officer notes that 'disadvantage is left at the door in this school'. This vision was clear to see during the inspection. You have already put in place effective actions that promote good attendance and you ensure that all pupils receive a broad range of educational opportunities. These include developing their learning through educational visits, extra-curricular activities and through the work of expert visitors in areas such as science.

You work effectively with leaders, including those on the local governing body and the academy trust, to address historical issues which have had a negative effect on pupils' outcomes. While leaders require further time to fully measure the impact of the work they are currently undertaking, I share your confidence in the steps made to date to bring about improvements in pupils' learning.

The pupils I spoke to during the inspection were polite and thoughtful. They have clear ambitions for the future and demonstrate a good awareness of the links

between hard work, regular attendance and achieving their goals. They are proud to represent their school in roles such as school councillors and head boy and girl.

The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. This is because leaders work hard to involve them in their children's learning. All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, said that their children were happy at school and were making good progress. Equally, almost all parents that I spoke to during the inspection were highly positive about the leadership of the school and the support that they receive from staff. One comment, reflecting the views of others, noted, 'Park View is a good school which is well led and all of the staff are very friendly and approachable.'

During the inspection, we discussed areas where further work is required to support your school improvement. Teachers are not routinely providing opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects across the curriculum, such as science, history and geography. Additionally, the progress of pupils in reading does not currently match the good level of progress seen in writing by the end of key stage 2. In mathematics and reading, teachers are not consistently providing pupils, especially the most able, with the clear steps they need to approach challenging tasks effectively. Furthermore, while much progress has been made in the teaching of phonics, leaders and teachers must further embed the new teaching strategies introduced. This is to ensure that pupils' understanding of phonics improves further.

Finally, your school's development planning lacks the refinement needed to ensure that leaders, including governors and members of the trust, can plan for, and check on the school's progress towards improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your school building is secure, and staff are thorough in checking the identity of visitors on entry. Leaders are effective in encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, the school's own attendance information shows that, over the last year, persistent absence has continued to decline and there has been a significant improvement in attendance.

All pupils who I spoke to told me that they feel safe in school and that members of staff help them when needed. Parents reflect this view. All those who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe in school and that staff look after them well.

Leaders in charge of safeguarding ensure that the systems to protect the most vulnerable pupils are thorough. Their paperwork is well maintained and evidences strong and effective links between the school and outside agencies. As a result, pupils receive focused support if needed.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I shared with you a number of lines of enquiry. The first considered how successful leaders have been in increasing pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics. Leaders are proactive in developing the teaching of mathematics by ensuring that there is consistency across the school in the way in which the subject is taught. This enables pupils to have increased opportunities to develop and build on their problem-solving and mastery skills. During the inspection, pupils in key stage 2 were successful when undertaking word problems where they had to give their opinions as to whether mathematical statements were correct or incorrect. This allowed them to develop their use of mathematical vocabulary and deepen their reasoning skills.
- Leaders are beginning to see the impact of their work to develop the teaching of mathematics. In Year 2, the school's provisional results of 2018 national assessments show that the number of pupils achieving the expected standard was in line with that seen nationally. Additionally, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 in this subject is good. However, pupils' work in books and leaders' own evidence from monitoring activities show that teaching in mathematics does not always provide pupils with the clear steps they need to approach challenging activities effectively. This results in more limited progress in some classes, most notably for the most able pupils.
- We also looked at the efforts made by leaders to improve pupils' progress in phonics. Historically, a lack of consistency in teaching these skills resulted in weaker learning. Leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching, for example by introducing a new system for the teaching of phonics. This ensures that pupils throughout the school receive phonics support which is appropriate to their individual needs. While it is too early to fully measure the impact of this new system, leaders shared information with me which shows that pupils in the early stages of their learning are beginning to make improved progress. This work will need to continue to ensure that pupils' understanding of phonics improves further and more pupils successfully pass the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- My next line of enquiry looked at how effectively reading is taught throughout school. You have begun work to resolve historical weaknesses in the teaching of this subject. There is now a structured reading curriculum throughout school and pupils develop a broader range of reading skills. Your monitoring shows that a limited vocabulary affects some pupils' progress in reading. Teachers now put greater emphasis on extending pupils' language and this is helping pupils to improve their understanding of the texts they read. Leaders have developed their links with parents and provide support through workshops to aid parents in supporting their children's reading skills at home. You ensure that leaders and teachers provide opportunities to further develop pupils' love of reading through events, such as book fairs and reading clubs in key stages 1 and 2. The work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in developing their reading skills. However, this is not as evident in the most able pupils' books where work set was not always challenging enough to develop fully their understanding of reading skills such as inference and deduction.
- My final line of enquiry considered what leaders have done to develop the

teaching of writing in school and whether leaders' successes in this subject could be used to further develop the teaching of reading. Your assessment leader accurately highlighted pupils' historical underperformance in writing. Leaders gained support from other Trust schools and, as a result, adapted the timetable to ensure that pupils have additional time to develop and practise their writing skills. Leaders have also introduced a structured programme to teach writing in the Reception class. This programme enables teachers to link the teaching of writing with reading. As a result of leaders' efforts to develop this subject, work in pupils' books shows good progress. Additionally, the school's most recent provisional performance information in 2018 shows that pupils' progress in writing was above average by the end of key stage 2.

Following some historical inaccuracies in information about pupils' performance, your assessment leader has worked hard to develop a strong and accurate system to measure pupils' progress. Leaders ensure that staff receive support and training in assessment procedures. Additionally, the opportunities provided for teachers to work with other schools in the trust now enable them to check the accuracy of their assessments more effectively. This has been effective and ensures that teachers now have accurate information from which to plan their learning.

- During the inspection, subject leaders shared with me their action plans to improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics and phonics. These plans are effective in developing the teaching of these subjects. However, the school's overall improvement plan is unnecessarily complicated. As a result, there is not a clear and coherent focus on the main areas that need developing further. This means that leaders cannot easily check on the school's progress towards improvement.
- We spent time looking at pupils' work in their books. Pupils take pride in their work and have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in a range of curriculum areas. However, they have limited opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of pupils in reading improves to match their progress in writing by the end of key stage 2
- pupils' understanding of phonics improves so the number of pupils passing the phonics screening test by the end of Year 1 increases towards the expected standard
- teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills in subjects across the curriculum
- school development planning is sharpened so that leaders and governors can more easily check on the school's progress towards improvement

- teachers provide the most able pupils with the clear steps they need to approach, with confidence, challenging tasks in reading and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with pupils to gain their views of school life and their understanding of safety. I held meetings with you to discuss your school's evaluation of performance and safeguarding procedures. I met with the chair of your local governing body, the chief executive officer for the academy and the operations director to discuss aspects of school leadership and safeguarding. I also met subject leaders to discuss the developments in their role and their subject action plans. I spoke with teachers to discuss the curriculum and safeguarding. I also spoke with parents about their views of the school.

I looked at pupils' progress in books and reviewed documentation, which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the school development plan. I considered 24 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and four responses from Ofsted's parent free-text survey.

I visited the early years classes and classes in key stage 1 and key stage 2, together with you, to observe pupils' learning. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.