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6 December 2018

Mrs Nicola Caley
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Dear Mrs Caley

Short inspection of Murray Park Community School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 2018 with Alison Davies, 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 June 2014.

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 the last inspection the school has undergone a number of changes. On your arrival in April 2018, you rightly identified the need for rapid improvements in aspects of leadership and teaching, learning and assessment. Across a number of different subject areas and groups of students, including disadvantaged pupils, attainment and progress were below the national averages, in some cases significantly so.

You have provided incisive leadership which has brought a positive impact to the culture and ethos of the school. Governors, senior and middle leaders and pupils told inspectors that the expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement have risen. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, also commented on the improvements seen during the last two terms. Nevertheless, since the last inspection, the progress and attainment of pupils, and disadvantaged pupils in particular, have fallen in a number of subjects, notably mathematics, science and humanities. It is too early to confirm that the changes implemented at the school will have the impact on pupils' outcomes predicted by leaders.

The last inspection identified the need to improve pupils' attendance. While there

has been improvement in attendance in the last year, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils still remains below the national average.

The previous inspection also identified the need to improve the quality of middle leadership. You have wasted no time in reviewing and restructuring middle and subject leadership roles. This has clarified and strengthened the lines of accountability for these leaders. However, there is still inconsistency within middle and subject leadership that does not support the rapid improvements necessary in teaching and learning. For example, some leaders are too generous in their evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning, and of pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding pupils. Systems for reporting concerns ensure that pupils are given the support they need. Staff receive regular training to make sure that pupils remain safe and thrive within the school environment. Leaders see this as one of their paramount priorities.

The designated safeguarding lead is thorough and tenacious in following through any concerns in a timely manner. This means that vulnerable pupils and those at risk are kept safe through regular engagement between school, parents and outside agencies. School records of pre-employment checks for staff are comprehensive and well kept.

There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Consequently, pupils feel cared for and valued. They know who to speak to if they have worries or concerns. The vast majority of pupils are confident that they will be listened to by their teachers and support staff and that any issues get dealt with quickly and effectively. The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe from risks, including when using social media and the internet.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes have typically declined, most notably in mathematics. Teachers' aspirations, particularly for disadvantaged pupils' achievements, have been too low, while their assessments of pupils' progress and attainment have been too high. This has contributed to teachers not setting work that is consistently well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as regularly, nor make the same levels of academic progress, as their peers. Until recently, governors and senior leaders have not evaluated the impact of the pupil premium on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes well enough. It is too early to assess the impact of improvements in the monitoring and checking of the use of the pupil premium.
- The role of middle and subject leaders is not fully developed. A number are relatively new to post or have not received the training and support they needed in the past. Consequently, their impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their respective roles of responsibility is not well

developed.

- Pupils are proud of their school. They have been actively involved in developing the core values of the school and are able to articulate them well. They appreciate that teachers and support staff are willing to give freely of their time, supporting both their academic aspirations and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- The behaviour of pupils has improved. Exclusions for unacceptable conduct have fallen sharply. The introduction of 'The Bridge', which provides extra support for pupils who at times have barriers to accessing education, is a clear indication of your commitment to inclusive education.
- The renewed curriculum offer enables pupils to access the full range of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils now have appropriate pathways and are no longer limited in their choice of GCSE subjects, which previously resulted in very few pupils studying a modern foreign language.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle and subject leaders rapidly increase their impact on pupils' outcomes in all subjects, and particularly mathematics, through accessing and implementing high-quality development and support from senior leaders
- disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and attendance urgently improve to close the gap when compared to those of other pupils nationally through:
 - governors' and senior leaders' regular and assiduous monitoring of the impact of the support provided to these pupils through the pupil premium
 - teachers ensuring that work is consistently matched to these pupils' abilities and prior learning
 - staff challenging and promptly addressing the causes of pupils' absence, particularly those who are persistently absent from school.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lewis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, senior and middle leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with you and a middle leader. They met formally with pupils from each year group, as well as having informal conversations with pupils in lessons. Inspectors visited 18 lessons, 11 of which were accompanied by senior or middle leaders.

Inspectors reviewed the single central record, safeguarding records and associated policies and procedures, including checks on the suitability of staff. They reviewed records on attendance and other evidence provided by the school, including school self-evaluation, school improvement planning and the review and plans for spending additional funds such as pupil premium monies.

Inspectors considered the 64 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the 124 responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils and the 73 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff. Inspectors also considered an email communication from a parent.