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Mrs Marianne Jeanes
Principal
Capital City Academy
Doyle Gardens
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Dear Mrs Jeanes

Short inspection of Capital City Academy

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2019, with Helen Bailey and Hayley Follett, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 November 2015.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your focus on determination, empathy and curiosity, and the transparency of your approach, helps all pupils feel valued. This motivates their commitment to learning and is raising achievement. Pupils and staff know that you are building the 'Capital Community' – a sense of belonging and mutually respectful, inclusive relationships – and are positive about this. The staff survey shows that the overwhelming majority of staff believe the school has improved since the last inspection and are proud to work there. They believe it is safe, well managed and well led.

Since the last inspection, school leaders and governors have continued the drive to improve standards. You have enhanced the quality of teaching and learning and are working to ensure that this is consistent across the school. You have reviewed and extended the curriculum, particularly in the sixth form. Leaders train and coach teachers to implement the assessment policy so that feedback properly extends pupils' learning. You have also reviewed and revised the school's behaviour policy.

You and your team strive to ensure a consistently high-quality curriculum, and address areas of underperformance. Senior leaders accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. They ensure that teachers receive effective training that meets their individual needs. As a result, teachers are developing the skills to enable all pupils to make more progress. Leaders know there is more work

to be done in ensuring that all subjects perform as well as mathematics and languages. Your assessment policy and teaching and learning handbook promote structured opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments and learning advice. However, the impact of this work is not yet completely embedded, and some inconsistency was still evident during the inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding which prioritises the safety of pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, both in the local area and online.

The single central record is carefully and effectively maintained. Your staff know pupils well, and keep a systematic watching brief on those that are vulnerable, engaging fully with relevant agencies. Training for all staff is regular and up to date. The designated safeguarding lead is also a member of the local safeguarding board, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub panel and exploitation and vulnerability committee.

Inspection findings

- Our first line of enquiry was to investigate whether the most able pupils are being sufficiently challenged across the curriculum. This was an area for improvement in the previous inspection and stated in your development priorities. 2018 examination results indicate that this group could achieve more.
- Middle and senior leaders take responsibility for able pupils. They lead professional development, check work in pupils' books and conduct lesson observations. In strong lessons, teachers skilfully develop pupils' understanding by asking probing questions. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding of challenging concepts. We saw an example of this in a geography lesson exploring reasons for variations in per capita income. In several lessons, samples of most-able pupils' work showed extended writing and deeper analysis in response to challenging teacher comments. School information and inspection evidence indicates that the most able pupils are making strong progress in English. However, the impact of training to improve learning for the most able was not evident in all the lessons we visited.
- Second, we agreed to look at the strategies used to raise achievement in science, humanities and vocational subjects. Attainment and progress in these subjects has been significantly below average for the last two years.
- Middle leaders have used focused training and support to drive improvement in humanities, science and vocational learning. The lessons we visited, work in pupils' books and school information showed that the quality of teaching and learning in geography is improving. Our visits to science lessons and the work in pupils' books in science showed less evidence of improved progress. Year 13 outcomes in vocational and applied learning were strong in 2018. This is because of effective teaching and support for students' learning. Vocational students' enthusiasm about their work placements and aspirations to progress to university and the world of work are enhancing their commitment to learning.
- Third, we agreed to consider the impact of leaders' work to improve behaviour, safety

and welfare. This priority is being addressed by leaders and governors following some challenging events in recent years.

- Pupils feel that they are safe because your provision for their welfare is effective. Their attendance continues to be above the national average because the improving quality of teaching helps motivate them to come to school. Pupils attending alternative provision are safe because you carefully monitor their attendance. Pupils value the lessons and assemblies that focus on online safety and the input of external providers, particularly on dealing with gang culture. Your behaviour logs and incident reports agree with pupils' view that bullying and prejudicial behaviour is rare in the school and is dealt with effectively. Pupils respect the new Capital Community approach. One group of Year 10 pupils said the Capital Community was the best thing about the school because it is about relationships between and among pupils and staff.
- Inspectors found that behaviour in most lessons was good. Nevertheless, in lessons where teaching was less effective, pupils seemed less eager to learn. Younger pupils believe that your new policies such as the 'alternative pastoral support' room are reducing disruption in lessons, and this is reflected in behaviour logs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently use highly effective questioning in order to increase most-able pupils' progress
- outcomes and progress for all pupils are improved by ensuring that subject leaders and teachers consistently implement the assessment policy and plan learning that is tailored to pupils' needs and abilities.

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 Brent. The letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Hudson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We looked at a wide range of school documentation, including self-evaluation, development plans, assessment information, minutes of governors' meetings, behaviour logs, attendance and exclusions data, risk assessments and documents relating to safeguarding, including case studies of vulnerable pupils. We visited 16 lessons and an assembly, accompanied by senior leaders. We looked at pupils' work and met with key stage 3 and 4 pupils and students in the sixth form. We spoke to pupils at social times and in lessons.

We met with middle and senior leaders, the designated safeguarding lead, attendance officer, pupil premium lead, more able coordinator, new and newly qualified teachers, the head of sixth form, and the chair of governors. We also took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.