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Mr Matthew Longden
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Dear Mr Longden

Short inspection of The Toynbee School

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 2019 with Mark Bagust, 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 October 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your principled and determined leadership has created a caring and stimulating ethos in the school that enables pupils to make strong progress and achieve well. You and your highly effective leadership team are ambitious for pupils and carefully consider their best interests in everything you do. Your planning goes beyond ensuring that pupils leave with good examination results. Pupils' well-being and personal development, including their mental health, have a high priority and are catered for well at your inclusive school.

You balance effectively your drive for high standards with the well-being of staff and pupils. Therefore, staff at the school trust and respect you and the leadership team. Morale is high at your school and everyone shares your determination to provide the best for each pupil.

At the time of your last inspection you were asked to secure high standards of behaviour for all pupils. Pupils now behave well at the school. They are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils are proud of the school and told inspectors that they enjoy the wide range of clubs and other activities on offer. Older pupils appreciate the extra support that is available to help them to prepare for public examinations. Most pupils attend very regularly, and leaders are determined in supporting the few pupils whose attendance needs to improve. A pupil, voicing the opinions of a group of pupils, said, 'Pupils are happy here. The teachers are great and really want to help us.'

In lessons, we saw pupils working hard and making effective use of feedback from their teachers. The work that inspectors saw in pupils' books is presented with care and is of a high standard. Pupils with a visual impairment are well supported by additional adults in the classroom and by equipment, such as electronic BrailleNote Touch readers. Teachers ensure that pupils with a visual impairment are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and that they achieve well.

Heads of subject and pastoral leaders are supported effectively by senior leaders to assess and track pupils' progress. This ensures that any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly spotted. A wide range of additional help is then given to help pupils who need to catch up. Leaders are meticulous in making sure that the additional help is effective and continues until these pupils are making the same strong rates of progress as other pupils in the school with similar starting points.

Leaders have developed effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching closely and check how well it contributes to rates of progress. As a result, leaders know that pupils continue to make strong progress in mathematics, science and humanities subjects. You also know the few subjects, such as English and food technology, where progress is not yet strong enough.

At the time of the last inspection you were also asked to deepen pupils' understanding of diversity and equalities. In response you have developed activities in lessons and during personal and learning development days which address all aspects of personal, social and health education. As a result, pupils understand that society is made up of people of different backgrounds, faiths and ethnicity and that it is important to show respect and kindness to all. School records show that racist and homophobic incidents are very rare. This was confirmed by pupils, who told us that the very rare instances of bullying or abuse are always effectively resolved by teachers. Pupils were able to talk confidently about the need for respect and tolerance and they were aware of the importance of reporting discrimination if it occurred.

Governors provide strong challenge and support to you and other leaders. They visit the school regularly, meet with groups of pupils, and analyse pupils' achievement thoroughly. As a result, they have a very good understanding of the school's many strengths and where further improvement is possible. For example, they recognise that pupils who are disadvantaged could make better progress in some subjects. Governors monitor carefully the impact of plans to improve the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged. They take a professional and reflective approach to their roles. For example, they regularly attend relevant training. Governors understand well the current financial challenges facing the school and they are working effectively with you to ensure that the school continues to thrive.

Parents and pupils speak highly of the school and nearly all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to other parents. Many parents commented that the school was caring, praised the teachers, and recognised that their children achieved well in a range of subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed, up to date and of high quality. Before appointing staff, leaders rigorously carry out all the required employment checks. All staff and governors are trained effectively in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and in the 'Prevent' duty.

A dedicated team of staff works with determination and sensitivity alongside pupils, parents and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils told inspectors that staff are approachable and that they know an adult they can turn to if they have concerns.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for managing their own safety. Pupils said that they learn about how to keep safe and the importance of respecting the rights of others. Leaders are rightly planning activities to develop further pupils' understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on the following lines of enquiry: how effectively leaders are improving rates of progress in English; how effectively leaders have responded to the decline in the rates of progress of pupils with low prior attainment; and the extent to which the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged is improving.
- You have acted effectively to improve the rate of progress of pupils in English, following the disappointing results in 2018. There are well-judged plans in place to improve teaching and learning for all pupils in English. Leaders' current assessments, and work that inspectors saw in books and lessons, show that pupils now make stronger progress in English. Pupils in key stage 4 who have fallen behind in English are given the extra help that they need to achieve well in their GCSE examinations. You and the head of English are determined to maintain your efforts to ensure that pupils make the same strong progress in English as in other subjects.
- You judged that pupils with low prior attainment who took their GCSE examinations in 2018 would be better served by allowing them to concentrate on fewer subjects than in previous years. This was successful, as nearly all these pupils gained the qualifications needed for their next steps and all transferred successfully to either education or training at the end of Year 11. However, with the current Year 11, and for the future, you are planning that low-prior-attaining pupils will take a full range of GCSE examination subjects so that their overall experiences and achievement can return to the high levels of previous years.
- You use the pupil premium grant wisely to support the academic and personal development of pupils who are disadvantaged. Governors evaluate rigorously the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the progress of vulnerable pupils. The

progress of pupils who are disadvantaged is tracked regularly, and teachers give effective help if a pupil's progress slow. Disadvantaged pupils made strong progress in English, mathematics, science and the humanities across the school. However, you are determined that pupils who are disadvantaged make the same strong progress in all subjects. The work we saw in lessons and leaders' assessment information indicate that their rates of progress across all subjects are now sound. Your determined efforts to improve the attendance of the few pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable whose attendance is poor are yet to be realised.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' achievement in English continues to improve
- pupils who are disadvantaged make the same strong progress in all subjects as they make in English, mathematics, science and humanities
- the attendance of pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, leaders, governors, and groups of pupils, both formally and informally. We visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, accompanied by senior leaders, and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and considered documents about safeguarding, attendance, current pupils' progress and governors' work. The outcomes of a pupil questionnaire, the staff survey, and 117 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were also considered.