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1 May 2019

Mrs Karen Hayes
Principal
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Dear Mrs Hayes

Short inspection of Derby Pride Academy

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 2019 with Ofsted Inspector Caroline Oliver, 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 outstanding in April 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and the staff team are determined that pupils achieve their full potential. Teachers have high expectations and pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils who struggle to read are provided with intensive support to help them become fluent readers. Pupils commented that teachers understand them well and they are motivated to learn in preparation for their next steps.

The members of the governing body are very knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development of the school. They support and challenge school leaders well to ensure that the school continues to improve. Leaders set an upbeat ethos in the school and the relationships between all staff and pupils are positive. Staff are attentive to pupils' needs and are quick to try and resolve any issues pupils may have. This ensures that pupils are focused on their learning in lessons. All staff who responded to the staff survey said the school was well led and managed.

Schools which commission places at Derby Pride for their pupils are delighted with the progress pupils make. One teacher commented: 'It has been the making of the pupils. There has been a significant turnaround and they are now on track to achieve their GCSEs.' All the commissioning schools who were contacted by inspectors would recommend the school. Parents and carers are equally pleased

with the school. They feel the staff know the pupils well, provide them with good careers advice and communicate frequently with them.

Pupils make accelerated progress from their starting points and achieve well. Most pupils achieve functional skills level 1, and some level 2, in English and mathematics. The most able pupils have attained a standard pass at GCSE in mathematics, but less so in English. Pupils achieve highly in art. Five pupils gained a standard or higher pass at GCSE in 2018. In addition, pupils achieved well at the equivalent GCSE level in personal finance and childcare studies. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

At the time of the previous inspection, the inspector asked you to increase the amount of outstanding teaching. You have been successful in achieving this aim. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects and structure their lessons well to enable the pupils to make strong progress. In art, pupils have used a variety of resources, for example acrylic paint and Modroc, to design, make and paint structures and paintings based on themes, such as spaces and habitats. Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work. The standard of artwork is high. The teaching of science is strong. Pupils are provided with clear explanations of scientific concepts and are provided with many opportunities to engage in practical investigations to deepen their understanding of scientific theories. Pupils are highly engaged in their childcare studies and could explain strategies to help younger children be more independent. The school accompanies the pupils to learn at other alternative provisions. Pupils learn how to prepare and cook healthy meals, increasing their knowledge of nutritious food. The curriculum is broad and balanced and teaching is highly effective.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders are very knowledgeable about the potential risks that pupils could face. They have put in place a comprehensive programme of training for staff to ensure that they can recognise the potential signs of abuse. Recent training has focused on child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, county lines illegal substance dealing and honour-based violence. Staff are highly vigilant and report any concerns promptly to leaders. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The designated leader for safeguarding works very well with a range of agencies to keep pupils safe. These include social care, the youth offending service, the school nurse and a local charity to help pupils who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. She has recently been commended for her work by the Derbyshire Constabulary for helping to protect pupils at risk of child sexual exploitation.

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on helping pupils keep safe. Pupils have learned about peer-on-peer abuse and child sexual exploitation. As part of this work, boys, as well as girls, have learned how they can be groomed. Pupils have learned about the dangers of illegal substance abuse from a volunteer from a local charity. There has been a strong focus on mental health and about the dangers of

self-harming. Finally, as part of sex and relationships education, pupils have learned about the importance of consent. The large majority of pupils who answered Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire felt safe at school. The school's own pupils' survey about safeguarding showed the overwhelming majority of pupils have someone they can talk with if they are concerned about something.

The behaviour of pupils is improving. The members of staff who support pupils to focus in class are skilled in ensuring that pupils maintain their concentration in lessons. The use of physical restraint to manage poor behaviour is rare. There have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection. The number of fixed-term exclusions has been steadily reducing over the past three years. Pupils commented that poor behaviour is always challenged.

The attendance of pupils is much higher than at other pupil referral units nationally. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is also smaller than for other similar schools nationally. However, the attendance of pupils is below that of other secondary and special schools. Furthermore, a small minority of pupils are not punctual to lessons in the morning and miss out on some of their education.

Inspection findings

- The key lines of enquiry for this inspection focused on leaders' ability to monitor and evaluate the school's work, and how effectively teachers are enabling pupils to make strong progress with their reading, writing and mathematics, particularly the most able pupils. Finally, inspectors looked at how effectively the school's careers advice, information and guidance enable pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching very well. They evaluate pupils' progress rigorously. They scrutinise pupils' work to check how much progress pupils are making. Furthermore, they speak with pupils regularly to check how much learning they have retained and understood. The findings from their checks enable leaders to give detailed feedback to teachers and inform training requirements. Leaders also invite subject leaders from mainstream schools to quality-assure the standard of work in a range of subjects. Leaders are determined that the quality of teaching should be of a high standard in the school. Staff receive training to develop their knowledge of the subject they teach, as well as about safeguarding and school policies and procedures. The quality of teaching is highly effective.
- The less able pupils have made rapid progress in their reading. All staff have been trained in phonics and have supported pupils to decode words accurately. Pupils' reading ages have risen rapidly due to targeted support for the less able. Pupils are encouraged to read texts from a wide range of sources to develop their general knowledge. The most able study more challenging texts, for example 'The Road to Wigan Pier' by George Orwell, and correctly analysed quotes which depicted a negative view. However, the most able pupils do not read regularly to widen their vocabulary and further develop a deep understanding of texts.

- Teachers are skilled in motivating pupils to plan their writing and to organise their ideas. Although some pupils are reluctant to do this, teachers skilfully explain the purpose of this strategy to enable the pupils to improve their writing. Pupils are beginning to use ideas and vocabulary they have read to improve their own writing. One pupil wrote, 'a tight-fisted, cruel and miserable old man'. However, the most able pupils are less proficient in composing their own writing in English and in other subjects. Consequently, their progress is not as strong in this aspect of the curriculum. Not as many pupils have attained a GCSE grade 4 or above in English compared to mathematics over the past few years.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils gain mathematical knowledge and then apply this knowledge to solve mathematical problems. For example, pupils used their knowledge of areas of circles to calculate the volume of cylinders. Pupils are regularly asked to explain their knowledge to check that they have retained it. The most able pupils are challenged well and remain very focused to solve more complicated problems. Pupils make strong progress in this subject.
- Pupils meet different providers of further education and local businesses to inform their next steps after the age of 16. Pupils are supported to write their curriculum vitae and their applications for college or apprenticeships. Leaders arrange work experience for those pupils for whom it is appropriate. Last year, some pupils received apprenticeships from their work experience placements. The most able pupils have visited the University of Derby to help to raise their aspirations. Most pupils have career ambitions and want to achieve the qualifications required for them to achieve their next step. The overwhelming majority of leavers from last year's cohort are in further education or have an apprenticeship. The school continues to work with the small minority of former pupils whose placements have broken down and are currently not in employment, education or training.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are more proficient in composing their own writing to help them to achieve a strong GCSE grade in English
- the punctuality and attendance of some pupils continue to improve so that they can better benefit from the outstanding quality of education provided.

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 Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, the two vice-principals who have responsibility for safeguarding, teaching and learning and English, respectively, the mathematics leader, four teachers and three members of the support staff. Inspectors spoke with three schools which commission places at Derby Pride Academy. Inspectors observed learning throughout the school and reviewed pupils' work. We also visited two alternative providers the school uses each week. We met with the chair and three other members of the governing body. Inspectors spoke with two groups of pupils. We reviewed records about keeping children safe and studied the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation. Inspectors spoke with three parents by telephone and reviewed the one parental response to the Ofsted free-text service. Inspectors reviewed the eight responses to the pupils' survey and the results from the school's parent survey in March 2018. We also reviewed the 16 responses to the staff survey.