

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Simon Garrill  
Chief Executive Officer  
Heartlands High School  
Station Road  
Wood Green  
London  
N22 7ST

Dear Mr Garrill

### **Short inspection of Heartlands High School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2019 with Ofsted Inspectors, Bruce Goddard and Yvonne Chisholm, 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 February 2016.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leaders are persistent in continuously improving the school. The school ethos, 'search for success', permeates the school community. Governors provide effective support to the school, and have effective systems in place to hold leaders to account.

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They have high expectations and are not complacent about challenges facing the school. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken effective actions to improve pupils' progress across subjects. For example, outcomes in modern foreign languages and geography have improved, following targeted interventions. Improvement planning and evaluation are focused and aligned across all aspects of the school. Middle leaders and teachers are challenged on a regular basis to identify barriers to learning for particular groups of pupils. You are confident in making the right decisions in a timely manner to address underperformance.

Pupils make strong progress in mathematics. This is because teachers' feedback on their work enables them to correct any misconceptions quickly. This deepens their understanding. Inspectors saw strong practice in English and citizenship lessons. Pupils received encouragement from their teachers and made valuable contributions to class discussion. However, in some modern foreign language lessons, some pupils struggled with the level of the work set. Leaders know there is still variation in performance between different subjects, and this remains a key focus for

improvement.

Staff morale is high. Middle leaders demonstrate enthusiasm and ambition to do the very best they can to improve pupils' outcomes. Teachers speak positively about the level of support and training they receive, and appreciate leaders' efforts to reduce their workload.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records of checks on employees, governors and volunteers are carefully recorded and up to date. Staff are aware of their safeguarding duties, and are clear about how to follow up any concerns or issues. Governors regularly monitor the school's safeguarding processes, and understand their statutory responsibilities. They commission external reviews, as appropriate. Staff and governors are fully aware of local risks, such as gang exploitation and knife crime. The school has been proactive in this area, and provides support for other schools in the local community. Leaders work very effectively with other agencies to promote safeguarding and keep children safe from harm.

The majority of pupils who met with inspectors said they feel safe at school. They value the support they receive. For example, the school rewards positive behaviour. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Most parents who completed the online survey would recommend the school to others. They are in agreement with what one parent wrote, commenting that 'Heartlands makes a real effort to recognise pupils' efforts and achievements.'

### **Inspection findings**

- We first agreed to explore how leaders ensure that the curriculum promotes strong progress and outcomes for all pupils and, in particular, pupils who enter the school with low starting points. This is because there has been variability in subject performance for the last two years, and a decline in performance in 2018 for lower-attaining pupils.
- Leaders review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it enables pupils to make good progress. The curriculum includes a wide range of subjects and breadth of choice. It is designed to take into account pupils' individual needs and well-being. Lower-attaining pupils now study for a range of appropriate public examinations. All pupils in Year 8 receive careers interviews, as an entitlement when choosing their option subjects. The vast majority of pupils progress successfully to further education, employment or training.
- Leaders and teachers consider how to sequence the curriculum so that pupils are encouraged to make connections in and across their learning. For example, in Year 9, global warming is taught in geography to prepare pupils for the later GCSE topic of resource management.
- There is very effective support for pupils to make a successful transition from

primary to secondary school. For example, in 2018 over 50% of the Year 7 cohort attended a summer school programme. This improved their confidence in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the school has employed subject specialist teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) more effectively. Inspectors saw strong practice in lessons. For example, teaching assistants used questioning to challenge pupils to solve problems and complete their work successfully.

- We next agreed to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's actions for improving provision and outcomes in science. This is because pupils' progress in science in the last two years was less than that in other subjects.
- Leaders have taken actions to improve teaching and learning. Teachers have high expectations across the department, although there is no measurable impact at this early stage. Leaders have reviewed the science curriculum. Topics are now organised to ensure that learning is reinforced over five years of study. Higher-attaining pupils enjoy their lessons, and their progress is strong.
- However, lower- and middle-attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress. During the inspection, low-level disruption was observed, which teachers did not challenge effectively. Too many of pupils' books do not show pride in pupils' work. Teachers do not routinely follow the school's assessment policy, which limits pupils' opportunities to improve their work.
- Finally, we considered how school leaders ensure that actions to improve pupils' behaviour have a positive impact on reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions. This is because the percentage of fixed-term exclusions and the proportion of pupils who have received more than one fixed-term exclusion have been above average for the last three years. In addition, pupils with SEND receive a far higher number of fixed-term exclusions than other pupils in school. This is also the case when compared to the national average.
- Leaders have put in place some actions to support pupils and staff in managing behaviour. For example, there is a significant focus on 'character education' and reinforcing positive behaviour in lessons and around the school. Teachers support the need to reduce exclusions, without compromising their high expectations. Recent information relating to exclusions for 2018/19 shows an improving picture. Teachers said they support pupils with SEND more effectively as a result of the recently introduced 'success passport'. This outlines specific guidance on how to meet individual pupils' needs.
- Pupils are offered a wide range of leadership and volunteering opportunities to help them to develop positive attitudes to learning. For example, pupils said they value the prefect system and anti-bullying ambassador scheme. They acknowledge that behaviour is improving, but said that it is variable. Parents are involved from the start in working with the school to improve their children's behaviour. Behaviour seen in the majority of lessons and around the school during the inspection was good.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- actions in science are precisely focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils' progress is stronger
- they routinely share successful practice in teaching and learning to further improve the quality of education across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Maguire  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we met with you and your senior leaders. We also met with three school governors and a group of middle leaders, as well as with leaders with specific responsibilities. We met with a group of staff and two groups of pupils. There were 42 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 99 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. We visited a range of lessons in key stages 3 and 4, some of which were accompanied by senior leaders, to observe learning and look at pupils' work. We also examined a selection of pupils' work. We evaluated a range of school documentation in relation to safeguarding, teaching, learning and assessment, school improvement planning and evaluation. We considered the school's data on current and projected academic performance.