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Mr Kevin Gaiderman
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Dear Mr Gaiderman

Short inspection of Chellaston Academy

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2018 with Christine Staley, Ofsted Inspector, and Ian Colling, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Under your leadership, the school has improved well. Since your appointment, in September 2015, you have established a clear sense of purpose and direction. You have maintained and developed the strengths of the school and made significant improvements where there were weaknesses. Consequently, since the previous inspection the progress of pupils has improved rapidly.

Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. You have high expectations and are not complacent about what needs improving and have planned carefully for the future development of the school. You and your senior colleagues work well as a team. Leaders and governors hold all staff to account. You believe strongly in empowering staff and pupils to do their best. The culture at Chellaston Academy is aspirational and is successfully motivating staff and pupils to strive for success.

You identify that, despite improvements, more needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make more progress, to match the high rates of progress reached by other pupils in the school. You also recognise that too many disadvantaged pupils are absent from school more often than other pupils. You have shown a determination to tackle this and new strategies have been developed. However, some of the actions taken, particularly in relation to attendance, have been more recent and have not yet resulted in the improvements that you expect.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your colleagues ensure that safeguarding has the highest priority in your school. Record-keeping is detailed and records are of high quality. You have a team who are skilled and committed to supporting pupils when they need help. Consequently, pupils are confident that they are safe and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. The vast majority of pupils who spoke with inspectors felt that bullying at the school was rare and that, if it did happen, staff dealt with it swiftly and effectively.

Safeguarding systems and checks on the recruitment of staff are in place and are of a high standard. Staff and governors are well trained and keep up to date on safeguarding issues and understand their responsibilities. Pupils are provided with learning opportunities so they know how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- You have responded very well to the areas for improvement from your last inspection. Improvements have been made to the quality of feedback pupils receive about their work. Consequently, they have a clear understanding about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Most pupils are responding well to this feedback and this is improving the progress they make.
- The collection and analysis of assessment data are now very thorough. Leaders track and measure the progress of pupils effectively. They use the data to identify actions to help improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have also taken effective action to improve teachers' use of assessment information to plan their lessons. Staff now use information about pupils well to organise their classrooms and ensure that work meets pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are challenged in lessons and make rapid progress.
- As a consequence of the significant actions you have taken, teachers teach well and the quality of learning is consistently strong across the school. There is a comprehensive programme of professional development that leaders plan according to need. Leaders ensure that rigorous quality assurance leads to improved teaching and faster progress for pupils across the curriculum.
- Pupils are making strong progress over time in their GCSE subjects. Pupils' attainment and progress improved in 2016. Further improvements were made in 2017 and overall progress improved to compare favourably with the top 20% of schools nationally. Data provided by the school on current pupils, and work seen in books, indicates that pupils across all year groups are on track to achieve

ambitious targets and make similar, or better, progress. Attainment and progress have been particularly strong in mathematics, languages and humanities subjects over the last two years.

- Strategies to support disadvantaged pupils are having much greater impact on their progress. Disadvantaged pupils now achieve broadly comparable outcomes to those of other pupils across the country. This is because staff understand the additional barriers that some disadvantaged pupils face and give them extra support. Nevertheless, further improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remains a school priority. This is because while disadvantaged pupils do as well as others nationally, they do less well than other pupils in the school. Data provided by the school on current pupils indicates that a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils are on track to achieve their targets and make similar progress to their peers in the school.
- The sixth form provides a good range of academic courses. Over the last three years, the progress pupils have made in the sixth form has improved and is above the national average.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance has been above the national average in recent years. However, too many disadvantaged pupils are absent too frequently. Consequently, the school has prioritised improving attendance for this group and new leaders have been appointed to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves. Carefully targeted interventions are being put into place but it is too early for them to evaluate the improvement yet.
- Teachers and pupils have very positive relationships. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. Pupils follow instructions quickly and lessons flow with minimal disruption. Instances of serious poor behaviour are rare and, consequently, exclusions are low.
- Pupils receive good pastoral care to support their well-being. A parent of a Year 11 pupil spoke with me and told me how much her son had benefited from the support he had received following a family bereavement, which had had a significant impact on him. He really valued the access he had to the school counsellor.
- The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. Governors have a clear understanding of data and, as a result, are equipped to provide you with critical challenge. They recognise that they have a key role in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make better progress and attend every day.
- The impact of your work as a leader has been recognised by the local authority and you have been asked to support other schools with their improvement. This support has helped to lead to improved outcomes in the two schools you have worked with.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop and embed strategies to improve the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils
- disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress in their GCSE subjects so their progress matches other pupils in the 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

Nigel Boyd
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, senior leaders, governors and one parent. Inspectors visited a number of subject areas with your senior leaders to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. They had formal meetings with groups of pupils from all year groups. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff. They reviewed records about attendance and examined a range of other documentary evidence, including that relating to your ongoing self-evaluation and data on pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspectors considered the views of 112 parents through their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and Ofsted's free-text service. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey or survey for staff to be considered.