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Ms Deborah Ball
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Ball

Short inspection of Kingsway Park High School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2017 with Dympna Woods, 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been a large number of staffing changes since that inspection. In 2015/16, for instance, a significant number of staff left the school. Their replacements, several of whom are newly or recently qualified teachers, have settled into the school well. Your senior leadership team has remained largely unchanged since the previous inspection. You and they continue to take the school forward with strength and determination.

The school benefits from being a member of the Kingsway Learning Trust, which also comprises a local secondary school and the local sixth form college. Both are outstanding providers. The local authority is also a member of the trust.

Kingsway Park is a very diverse community which successfully brings together pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, races and cultures. It regularly takes in pupils from other schools. It is also the 'preferred school' for the local authority for the placement of pupils who arrive from foreign countries. The school recently opened its own International New Arrivals Centre, which is staffed by a specialist teacher and teaching assistants who provide effective language and pastoral support for pupils arriving from abroad. As a result, the school is successful at integrating these new pupils and addressing the different challenges they bring.

You provide strong and effective leadership. The school has good capacity to go on improving. You and your governors have very good knowledge and understanding

of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve the school further. You identified a number of aspects which needed further improvement, such as the achievement of White British boys and the quality of teaching in science, and you and your senior colleagues are taking effective action to address these issues. For example, earlier this year, you called in a team of external consultants and a peer headteacher to review the science department and you have acted strongly on their recommendations.

You, your senior team and your governors are determined that staff at all levels must meet expected standards. There is no complacency. Staff themselves understand the need for this consistency and those who met inspectors were very complimentary about your leadership. They told inspectors that staff morale is high. They welcome the many opportunities they have for professional development, for example to develop their potential as 'home-grown' leaders. The overwhelming majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are highly appreciative of your leadership and its strong impact on the ethos of the school and the welfare of the pupils. The great majority of parents who have responded to the school's own surveys feel that the school is well led and managed.

Governors, senior leaders and staff have taken successful action to address all of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. In 2013, inspectors identified the need to eradicate teaching which was less than good. Your own records show that most teaching remains consistently good and inspectors saw evidence of this in many lessons visited on this inspection. You have taken firm action where teachers did not meet required standards. As you acknowledge, there remains work to do to ensure that more pupils of high ability achieve the highest GCSE grades.

Pupils make good progress overall from low starting points. In 2016, the school's Progress 8 score, the new government measure by which secondary school achievement is judged, was significantly above national averages. In English and in modern foreign languages, the progress made by pupils was in the top 10% of schools nationally. English is a strength of the school. Progress was also well above average in mathematics and it was in line with national averages in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and humanities. Progress in science was below average, however. The school's internal assessment data shows that most pupils currently on roll continue to make good progress overall in most subjects.

You and other leaders have established an ethos in which every pupil is valued. The school is a harmonious community where pupils get on well together and respect one another's differences. Pupils told inspectors that there is no racist or homophobic behaviour. The school does good work on teaching pupils about British values and it promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Pupils receive good careers advice and guidance. The school reduced the number of pupils not in sustained education, employment or training in 2015. Although this figure rose again initially for 2016 leavers, the school is awaiting further information from outside agencies and expects the provisional figure to lower again.

The school is inclusive and staff provide strong pastoral care and welfare for their pupils. Behaviour around school is typically good and is well managed. In lessons seen by inspectors, pupils behaved well and the great majority displayed positive attitudes to learning. Pupils confirmed to inspectors that there is little disruption to their learning in lessons and that teachers quickly address it if it occurs.

Governance is very strong. Governors know the school and its strengths and weaknesses well. They hold leaders rigorously to account and ask challenging questions to assess the quality of provision, for example when they ask senior and middle leaders to present evaluations of their areas of responsibility. Governors manage finance effectively, including the pupil premium and the school's use of its funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience to the governing body. Several are or have been senior leaders in local secondary schools or the sixth form college and a number sit on the trust board which oversees the work of Kingsway Park's local governing body. Governors play a strong role in setting the strategic direction of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that the school has a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance. Safeguarding procedures are thorough, robust and understood by all staff and governors. Your recruitment checks are sound and all safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. All staff receive up-to-date training and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. External agencies are used appropriately to support pupils and their families. Staff, pupils and governors have had training on 'Prevent', the government's programme for preventing radicalisation and extremism.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying rarely occurs, but if it does, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils feel that the school is very safe. They know how to keep themselves safe on the internet and when using social media. The school has effective internet filtering procedures in place.

Inspection findings

- The headteacher has acted incisively to address significant underachievement in science, which occurred in 2015 and again in 2016. She has also taken action to improve pupils' attainment in the GCSE separate sciences, which was well below national averages in 2016. To address these issues, she brought in specialist support from a neighbouring teaching school and has appointed a new curriculum leader for science from September 2017. In the last two years, several science teachers have left the school. As a result, teaching in science is improving and leaders are confident that outcomes will improve significantly this year. They know, however, that there is still work to do to ensure that teaching in science is consistently good and that all pupils make the progress expected of them.
- Leaders have taken prompt action to accelerate the progress of low-ability pupils, including low-ability disadvantaged pupils, which was weak in several areas in

2016. The school has significantly enhanced the development of literacy across the curriculum, for example via a number of programmes which encourage pupils to read. Leaders have created a special 'foundation group' to support the development of low-ability learners in Year 7. The inspector who visited this class noted the pupils' enthusiasm and their positive progress. Some of the school's strongest teachers now teach the lowest-ability classes. As a result of these actions, low-ability pupils are making better progress. The differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers are diminishing in most subjects, especially in Years 8, 9 and 11.

- In 2016, despite making strong progress overall, few of the most able pupils attained the highest GCSE grades in some subjects, including in mathematics. School leaders are aware of this issue and are actively seeking to raise levels of challenge for high-ability pupils. Inspectors noted good levels of challenge for the most able in pupils' work and in several lessons on this inspection. There was clear improvement in mathematics in this regard. Leaders accept that they still have more work to do to raise the achievement of the most able cohort.
- Leaders have also worked hard to raise the aspirations of all pupils, especially for the most able cohort. A number of pupils have visited universities to experience taster sessions, for instance. The school's new 'Aspirations Centre' allows pupils to do work before and after school and to access 'mastery teaching' in English and mathematics. The most able cohort in Year 9 is following a project which requires them to do deep research in order to 'graduate' to a diploma.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It offers pupils a range of appropriate courses, including some vocational options, and the school is steadily increasing the percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate. Departments' planning ensures that work for younger pupils is challenging and builds on the learning they acquired at primary school.
- Attendance is above national averages. The school has successfully reduced the persistent absence of a few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the overall attendance for this cohort of pupils has now risen above national average.
- In 2016, the percentage of pupils receiving fixed-term exclusions was high, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have done good work to address this, with the result that numbers of exclusions have reduced significantly this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to take all necessary steps to improve teaching and achievement in science
- they take action to raise levels of challenge further in those subjects where most-able pupils are not yet reaching the highest GCSE grades.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Rochdale. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Hurren
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we held discussions with you and your senior colleagues, a group of subject leaders and, separately, a group of teachers. I met with members of the governing body. We met formally with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4 and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You and your senior colleagues accompanied us on visits to lessons, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some books. We examined a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, attendance information, a range of policies and the school's curriculum and assessment information. I scrutinised your self-evaluation and your school improvement planning.

I also undertook a review of the school's website. I took account of the school's internal parental survey results and of the 45 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for pupils and there were too few responses to Ofsted's Parent View service for results to register.