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Linda Brooks
Principal
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Dear Linda Brooks

Short inspection of Manor School Sports College

Following my visit to the school on 4 May 2016 with Lynn Cox, 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the governors and your senior leaders have maintained a strong focus on ensuring that there are high expectations of both staff and pupils. At the same time, you have ensured that pupils receive opportunities to develop their leadership roles and support each other. Consequently, pupils achieve well at your school, while, at the same time, developing a secure understanding of their place within the school, the local community and multicultural Britain.

Leaders at all levels, thoroughly, check on the quality of teaching that takes place at the school. Where standards in teaching or pupils' outcomes do not meet your high standards, leaders provide effective support and take prompt action in order to secure rapid improvement. For example, all teachers have received training to ensure that they plan appropriately to meet the needs of the most-able pupils, of which there are now increasing proportions. You, rightly, recognise that some subject areas do not meet these pupils' needs fully. However, you have undertaken effective action to ensure that the leadership and the quality of teaching in these areas receive the support necessary to secure improvement in this respect.

You have rightly reviewed those areas of the school that did not perform as well as you expected in 2015. You have taken prompt and effective action, particularly regarding students' outcomes at A level and pupils' outcomes in modern foreign languages, history, and geography at GCSE. You work closely with other

organisations to ensure that your assessment of pupils' work and the progress they make is accurate. Because of this, pupils' attainment, currently, is at a higher level than it was last year.

You and the other leaders have created an inclusive culture that encourages pupils to celebrate their differences and to support each other in their learning and their wider development. Pupils receive a wealth of opportunities to secure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The opportunities include pupils' consideration during their form time of contemporary issues and their involvement in the many and varied enrichment activities that are available to them. The 'leadership academy' enables pupils to take on positions of responsibility, while you use sixth-form students well to act as role models and to support younger pupils. Consequently, the pupils are confident individuals, who accept people's differences and who are able to articulate their ideas in a clear, open and sensitive manner. The fact that the student council has chosen, of its own volition, to set up a committee that raises pupils' awareness of homophobia, transphobia, racism, and sexism is helping to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Almost all pupils who met with inspectors agreed that it was safe to be different at the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and are aware of the signs of abuse that they should look for in the pupils they teach. Staff and governors receive training regularly in relation to safeguarding. The training has included guidance in relation to female genital mutilation and the prevention of extremism and radicalisation. Staff are highly vigilant about the welfare of the pupils and work closely with the eight designated safeguarding leads in order to share any concerns, where they may arise. These designated safeguarding leads work effectively as a team to support potentially vulnerable pupils. They make referrals to external agencies, when appropriate, and are tenacious in ensuring that those agencies take appropriate action.

Staff responsible for pupils' welfare are keenly aware of the issues in the local community that affect their pupils. They take appropriate and often preventative action to support their pupils where they identify the need. All pupils who met with inspectors said that they felt safe at the school and that they had a member of staff they could go to if they had any concerns. They were also aware of the online form that they can use to make staff aware of any issues that they may have. Pupils are confident that staff deal with bullying effectively, on the rare occasions that it occurs. Almost all parents and staff share the view that pupils at your school are safe.

Inspection findings

- You, your senior leaders and governors have a precise view of the quality of the school's provision. You have put into place an effective action plan to ensure that the school's provision continues to meet effectively the needs of all groups of pupils. Governors offer appropriate support and challenge.

- Other leaders who have responsibility for pupils' welfare work effectively to support potentially vulnerable pupils, including children who are in the care of the local authority, particularly in ensuring that they attend more regularly and that they make the progress expected of them. The school has employed a member of staff who works closely with pupils who are regularly absent from the school. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who are absent from school, including those who are regularly absent, is now below national levels. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are absent from school remains above national levels. You recognise this as an issue. Consequently, you have put into place appropriate strategies to support these pupils to encourage them to attend school more regularly.
- Senior leaders monitor pupils' behaviour closely. They keep precise records of the different types of behaviour that pupils demonstrate and of the actions that leaders have taken as a result. This enables senior leaders to identify trends in behaviour and provide appropriate support. The pupils who, due to their poor behaviour, attend the 'return to learn' unit receive opportunities to reflect on their actions. Because of these effective strategies to support those pupils who have behavioural needs, the rates of exclusions, including repeat exclusions, at the school have dropped. They are now well below national levels.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the most-able pupils achieve as highly as they should. Subject leaders have reviewed their respective subjects' programmes of study to ensure that these stretch and challenge the most-able pupils. Furthermore, teachers now have designated time to consider the performance of the most-able pupils and to share best practice. Because of this, the proportion of most-able pupils who leaders expect to achieve the highest grades this academic year has increased in most subject areas, when compared with outcomes for 2015. However, the proportions of most-able pupils achieving the highest grades in geography, history, and French, although improving, remain below national levels.
- Senior leaders have acted on those areas where pupils did not achieve as well as they should have at GCSE in 2015. Senior leaders have reviewed the leadership structure of the modern foreign languages and humanities departments to ensure that there is a tighter focus on the quality of teaching. Consequently, current Year 11 pupils' progress is improving, particularly in history and in French. However, the proportion of most-able pupils making the progress expected of them is still below national levels in geography, history, and French.
- Subject leaders work closely with senior leaders to check on pupils' outcomes and on the quality of teaching. The senior leader responsible for achievement provides a strong lead in checking on the progress of all groups of pupils across all years. Subject leaders provide teachers with opportunities to share best practice and to check the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' work. These opportunities include teachers working together within their subject areas, as well as working with external organisations. Where necessary, senior leaders and subject leaders provide effective support, including appropriate training, to develop teachers' practice. Because of this, leaders at all levels are secure in their evaluation

of the quality of teaching and their use of assessment.

- The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and of their peers nationally at GCSE in English and mathematics continued to close rapidly in the last academic year. Senior leaders and governors monitor closely the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They evaluate regularly the effectiveness of the support these pupils receive through the school's use of additional government funding. The school's achievement information for current disadvantaged pupils shows that the gaps continue to close.
- Standards in the sixth form are now much improved when compared with 2015 outcomes. Senior leaders have considered thoroughly the reasons behind students' underperformance at A level in 2015. Senior leaders have reviewed the support that pupils receive in making their choices of subjects to study at A level. Senior leaders have also ensured that they monitor students' progress more closely than previously. Students who are falling behind receive appropriate support to catch up. Students also receive close support and guidance in making applications for their next steps when they leave Year 13. The school's performance information suggests that students are currently achieving at higher levels than students did last year. The progress in those subjects that underperformed in 2015 is now greatly improved.
- Senior leaders have developed strong links with the local feeder primary schools to ensure that pupils' transition between Years 6 and 7 is smooth. These links have enabled leaders and teachers within the school to work closely with the teachers in the primary schools to ensure that pupils are ready for secondary school when they complete Year 6. Because of this, teachers have a good understanding of the Year 7 pupils' levels of ability when they first arrive at the school. Teachers, from the first moment, are able to provide learning opportunities that develop pupils' levels of understanding effectively. Consequently, very high proportions of pupils across all years in key stage 3 are working at, or above, their target levels.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed those strategies that are already in place to improve the progress of the most-able pupils across all subjects, but particularly in French, geography, and history.
- they monitor closely and evaluate the impact of actions leaders are taking to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, to ensure that their attendance is at least in line with national levels.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hollingsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your senior leaders, governors and subject leaders of English, mathematics, humanities, and modern foreign languages. Inspectors carried out 12 lesson observations across a range of subjects in all key stages. I conducted four of these lesson observations jointly with you, in your role as the principal. Inspectors met with members of the student council, with pupils in Years 9 and 10, and with students in the sixth form. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, during breaktime and lunchtime and between lessons. They took these opportunities to speak further with pupils. We viewed records about keeping students safe and about attendance and punctuality. We examined a range of documents, including information about student achievement, governors' meeting minutes, and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plan. An inspector spoke with a representative of an alternative provision, which some of your students attend. Inspectors took into account the views of 108 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of 64 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire. At the end of the day, I gave feedback to you, your senior leadership team and members of the governing body.