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26 March 2018

Mr Paul Gamble
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gamble

Short inspection of Harrow High School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018 with Avnee Morjaria, 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have successfully addressed the areas that were identified for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Outcomes in GCSE examinations have improved. Pupils have made above-average progress over recent years. You and your senior leadership team continue to work on other areas which require further attention to improve the progress of the most able and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Middle leaders are not as involved in securing improvements within their areas of responsibility.

Members of your governing body have had a long association with the school. As a consequence, they know it well and correctly identify areas for further development. They challenge and support you in your role, occasionally taking part in joint reviews of the school with the local authority. This helps them secure a more thorough understanding of the quality of education the school provides.

The majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View were supportive of the school. One parent commented that his son 'has achieved high grades and settled in the school extremely well'. The proportion of pupils who start at the school at different times and in different year groups is higher than that seen nationally. The school deals with this situation effectively.

Pupils are well behaved, respectful and courteous. Those in the sixth form spoke highly of the support they receive in lessons and the school's guidance with university applications.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality. Governors monitor the training for all staff. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding update the training regularly. Pupils receive the same level of training as their teachers through assemblies. Leaders and other staff work in partnership with a range of external agencies to safeguard pupils' welfare. Staff and pupils know who they should report any safeguarding concerns to. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and in the local area. Pupils also spoke positively about the school's new 'see it, report it, stop it' anti-bullying initiative and the online system for reporting any bullying concerns. This complements the new behaviour policy introduced at the school. This has had a positive impact on the atmosphere of the school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that the inspection would focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils, especially in mathematics. We also considered how the results that disadvantaged pupils attain enable them to progress into the sixth form. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was one of the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection. This has been a priority for the school. Examination results for 2017 overall and in mathematics showed that the progress of disadvantaged pupils was in the top 5% nationally. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who continue their education in the sixth form is similar to the proportion of other pupils.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics and achieve above-average results. However, leaders have identified a need to carry out further work to strengthen the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning in mathematics for Year 7. This will help teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs
- The second focus for the inspection was pupils' progress and attainment in geography and history, particularly for most-able pupils. This was because the most able pupils made less progress than the most able pupils nationally by the end of key stage 4 in geography.
- We looked at current assessment information, which revealed an improving trend in outcomes. The proportion of the most able pupils meeting or exceeding the targets set by the school in geography is improving. In history, pupils' progress is variable across the year groups in key stage 4. Assessment information shows that pupils in Years 7 and 8 make strong progress in both subjects.
- The pupils said that they enjoy history and geography more now than in the past. They expressed particularly positive views about geography. However, we found that there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils in these subjects. As a result, these pupils do not get the opportunity to learn or achieve as much as they are capable of.

- The third area of focus was the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Examination information from previous years indicated that these pupils did not make as much progress as their peers. The attendance rates of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are below national figures and an above-average proportion is frequently absent from school.
- Leaders monitor absences each week. You have worked with outside agencies in order to tackle some instances of persistent absence. Leaders and staff follow up the absence of pupils. This has resulted in improved attendance rates for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- You have introduced a strengthened system to support pupils who are at risk of exclusion from school. It is starting to have a positive impact on improving behaviour and reducing rates of exclusion. The numbers of repeat exclusions for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are decreasing. However, the school's current information shows that the impact of the support put in place on progress is not apparent. These pupils do not make sufficient progress in core subjects, especially in mathematics and science.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Pupils are appropriately challenged in their work, particularly the most able pupils in geography and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
- Middle leaders have a stronger involvement in developing 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 Harrow. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Luisa Bonelli
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors visited classes, conducted joint observations with senior leaders, looked at work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils. Inspectors met with school leaders, the leader with responsibility for safeguarding and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the governing body and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding. In addition, inspectors analysed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents. Nine responses were received. No responses were received to the staff questionnaire.