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Lisa Walton
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Dear Mrs Walton

Short inspection of John Flamsteed Community School

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2019 with Karen Hayes, 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 January 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 provide strong leadership and are ably supported by the head of school and two deputy headteachers. You have a clear vision for the school and are extremely aspirational for pupils' success. You have high expectations of staff and pupils and have created a culture of belief in which all feel valued. Staff are keen to realise your aims for the school. Staff morale is high. Pupils recognise that their teachers want them to do well and succeed in life.

Pupils are proud to be members of the school. They are polite, confident and articulate. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' oracy and social skills. Staff model positive behaviours, which pupils replicate. There are extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils. Pupils understand diversity and respect others' beliefs and values. The school is harmonious and welcoming. Your concept of 'one culture', where there is mutual respect and care, is evident throughout the school.

You have taken effective action to address the areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection. You have ensured that all staff and pupils believe in the concept of 'precious learning time'. Lessons are planned around an agreed structure, and teachers ensure that pupils meet their high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are punctual to lessons. They settle quickly and concentrate on their work. Leaders, at all levels, focus relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching across the school. Middle leaders have taken greater responsibility for

leading developments in their subject areas. They conduct monitoring activities and lead professional development work for staff in their own departments and across the school. The heads of department work collaboratively and share good practice well. Leaders have amended programmes of study to provide pupils with more opportunities to practise their extended writing. You have introduced clear expectations for pupils' presentation. Most pupils take pride in their work, and the quality of presentation across the school has improved greatly. Some inconsistencies remain, however, particularly among low prior attaining pupils who are not supported effectively to improve this aspect of their work.

Governance is provided by the trust board and a local governing body (LGB). Most aspects of governance are delegated to the LGB, whose members conduct their duties diligently and effectively. Governors are knowledgeable and understand the school's performance. There is a range of expertise and experience in the LGB which is used well by allocating responsibilities to match members' skills and knowledge. Governors provide challenge and hold leaders to account effectively.

The trust has provided good support. For example, middle leaders have worked with trust directors of subjects to help develop their leadership skills. Teachers have also liaised with staff from other schools within the trust to ensure accuracy of assessment.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. A culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The designated safeguarding lead is well supported by a team of trained staff. Systems for referring safeguarding concerns are straightforward and understood by all. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training. They recognise their responsibilities in safeguarding matters, including in relation to local risks. Leaders involve external agencies when necessary and are tenacious in following up concerns to ensure that pupils get the help they need quickly.

The curriculum supports pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils learn about pertinent issues in discrete lessons which are delivered by trained, specialist staff. Pupils are very knowledgeable about safeguarding matters, locally, nationally and globally.

Inspection findings

- Leadership, at all levels, is a strength of the school. Leaders' approach to school improvement is strategic. They evaluate their actions thoroughly and amend their plans accordingly. Middle leaders are empowered to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have introduced a clear and simple framework for the structuring of lessons, which teachers apply consistently. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Leaders have also introduced a new

whole-school assessment and feedback policy, designed to make feedback to pupils 'meaningful, motivational and manageable'. Heads of department have adapted the policy to suit their subject needs. The application of this policy is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in many areas, for example in English and humanities. However, it is not applied consistently in all subject areas. Pupils do not always understand what they need to do to improve their work and to make progress.

- Leaders review the curriculum regularly. They evaluate its effectiveness and make carefully considered amendments to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of changing cohorts. Pupils at key stages 3 and 4 experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils select from a wide range of subjects to study at key stage 4. The breadth of choice contributes to pupils' motivation as they follow courses which interest them.
- The proportion of pupils who follow the English Baccalaureate suite of courses has increased year on year and now exceeds the national average. Pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, in these subjects has been consistently above the national average in recent years.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching and to the leadership of vocational and practical subject areas have contributed to pupils making better progress in these subjects than in the past. Progress and attainment in these subjects improved between 2017 and 2018 but remained below the national average. However, as these improvements become embedded, the quality of provision in these subject areas continues to improve. Leaders' tracking information and work in pupils' books indicate that current pupils are making very good progress.
- Pupils have responded well to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils behave and conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel valued and recognise that staff hold their interests at heart. They feel that they are treated fairly. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are supported well. Leaders aim to resolve any issues quickly to ensure that pupils do not miss out on 'precious learning time'. The use of fixed-term exclusions has declined considerably and is now below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are repeatedly excluded has also fallen greatly.
- Whole-school attendance has been consistently above the national average in recent years. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has been increasing. In 2018, it was above average and considerably so for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have taken effective action to support pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly. The student services team follows up attendance concerns and involves external agencies when necessary. Pupils understand the need for regular attendance. The attendance of pupils who are currently in the school is increasing. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has declined significantly and is now below the national average for all pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recently introduced strategies to improve the quality of education, particularly in relation to improving teaching practice in the classroom, are embedded
- teachers consistently implement the school's assessment and feedback policy so that teachers' feedback and guidance lead to pupils making further progress
- rates of persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, continue to fall by maintaining the current focus on this aspect of the school's work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders and teaching staff. I also met with the vice-chair of the LGB and the director of secondary education from the trust. Together with senior leaders, inspectors observed learning in a range of classes from different subject areas and year groups and discussed the strengths and weaknesses observed.

Inspectors met with a group of pupils and considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey. They spoke with pupils in their lessons and looked at their work to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors considered 61 free-text comments and 122 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. An inspector met with a group of staff and considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

A range of school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and information about pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at the information published on the school's website.