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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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28 February 2018

Ms Janice Allen
Headteacher
Falinge Park High School
Falinge Road
Shawclough
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL12 6LD

Dear Ms Allen

Short inspection of Falinge Park High School

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 2018 with David Hampson and Alyson Middlemass, Ofsted Inspectors, 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. Most of the leadership team are new in post. In the two years since your appointment, you have brought together a team that is unified in its vision and purpose. This is also evident among all staff. The response to Ofsted's questionnaire from staff was overwhelmingly positive. Staff are proud to work at the school and are confident in your leadership. This culture, where staff feel valued and their work and life balance is considered important, is appreciated by those who work at the school. The promotion of this culture has proven to be successful, as the outcomes for most pupils are strong.

Your analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. The evaluation is informed by secure evidence of impact. You have identified the right priorities, and the plans to support these are fitting. Already these plans are bringing about improvements. This is notable, for example, in science.

The main area for improvement identified in the last inspection related to the quality of teaching and learning. So as to ensure that these improvements were sustainable, you identified other aspects of provision that needed to be strengthened first. For example, you improved the attendance of pupils and lowered the proportion of those who were persistently absent and those who were temporarily excluded from school. You also identified underperformance in certain subject areas and dealt sensitively so as to resolve it. You and your leaders have

been cautious in not adopting quick-fix solutions and have preferred to take a more considered approach to school improvement. In the circumstances of Falinge Park High School, this approach has been appropriate.

So as to improve teaching and learning, leaders have devised a specific strategy which incorporates the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Challenge, effective questioning and teachers checking pupils' understanding are clearly improving. Work in pupils' books and discussions with pupils indicated that some teaching is not as good in some areas as it is in others. You are well aware of this and have correctly identified that in these areas assessment is not as well embedded. As a result, not all pupils' needs are being met, based on their ability.

Governors are effective in fulfilling their legal responsibilities. They are evaluative and reflective in their work. Governors' knowledge of the school is rooted in reliable evidence. They are proactive in making sure that they have the appropriate skills and training. Governors are focused on monitoring the impact of the actions that leaders take. They have a justified confidence in the capacity and ability of you and your team to make further improvements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They have developed robust and effective systems for referring, monitoring and evaluating safeguarding concerns. The single central record is compliant and all statutory responsibilities are met. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and know who to talk to if they have any concerns. The effective training that staff receive means that they are well equipped to respond to these concerns appropriately. Statutory safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Inspection findings

- Achievement in science in 2017 was negatively affected by historically poor curriculum decisions. This situation has been remedied and all pupils follow the course best suited to their needs. Inspectors saw evidence of an increase in challenge and expectations for pupils. Leadership of science is strong. The systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. Pupils in key stage 3 are making particularly good or better progress.
- White British pupils have not made good enough progress in recent years. Nonetheless, the progress made by this group of pupils was much better in 2017. This positive picture is evident for pupils currently at the school, especially for White British boys. There is still more work to do on this, but there is no doubt that the achievement of these pupils has improved and is improving.
- You and your leaders have focused on developing a curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. The principles that underpin the curriculum are evident in teachers' planning and what is happening in the classroom. Leaders have informed their design of the curriculum with credible evidence and research. While the enthusiasm, energy and passion that leaders show for the curriculum provision is tangible, it is important that the development and promotion of pupils' basic skills

are not lost. Too many pupils make errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar, especially in subjects other than English.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the changes being made to the curriculum promote and develop pupils' basic literacy skills
- the assessment systems are embedded and are used effectively by all teachers to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs, based on their ability.

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

Jonathan Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, we met with you and your senior leaders and members of the governing body. With senior leaders, we conducted a learning walk, visited classes and had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work. We met with a group of pupils. There were 53 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents and carers, nil pupil responses and 65 staff responses. We scrutinised your school improvement planning, behaviour, bullying and exclusion records, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices. We also reviewed a wide range of documentation and held discussions about the curriculum, the achievement of White British pupils, provision in science and the improvements made to teaching and learning.