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Amy Cavilla
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Dear Ms Cavilla

Short inspection of Nonsuch High School for Girls

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Yvonne Chisholm, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good standard of education since the last inspection. The school is part of the Nonsuch and Wallington Education Trust (NWET), which was formed in September 2015. There is currently one other school in the NWET.

You were appointed as the permanent headteacher of the school in September 2016, after a period of temporary leadership since the previous headteacher left during the 2014/15 academic year. Parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are looking forward to benefiting from the stability that your appointment has brought to the school. You have accurately self-evaluated the school's effectiveness and have a good plan in place to build on its strengths. You have rightly identified that improving outcomes in the sixth form is the main priority for the school.

Pupils told inspectors that they find their lessons interesting and that teachers link their learning to the real world. They were particularly clear that teachers discuss with them 'why we are learning' the various topics and that this helps deepen their understanding of what they are studying. Pupils said that they regularly tackle work that is more demanding. As a result, since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment at the highest GCSE grades by the end of key stage 4 has consistently been above national averages. In 2016, provisional outcomes show that the school was in the top 2% of all schools for overall progress and in the top 5% for almost

all subjects and groups of pupils.

The sixth form is large and represents over 25% of the school population. The progress made by students in the sixth form is improving, but rates of progress, particularly for students with exceptional abilities, is not as rapid as it should be. Progress in the different subjects that students study also varies from year to year.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All pre-employment checks meet statutory requirements.

Leaders track the impact of safeguarding training by monitoring the rates of referrals made and by ensuring that staff understand the training they have received. Leaders know the local risks affecting pupils and have a range of appropriate strategies in place to ensure that any warning signs are identified quickly. Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View felt that their child was safe and happy in school, and that their child was well looked after. Pupils, both those who responded to the pupil survey and those that spoke to inspectors, overwhelmingly said that they feel safe in school. Pupils were able to talk confidently about the range of opportunities they have to learn about staying safe, both inside and outside school. This includes when online and using social media. They were equally confident in talking about different types of bullying and how rare it is. Pupils say that when it does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- The first agreed key line of enquiry focused on the quality of leadership and teaching in the sixth form. You have identified that although the proportions of students attaining A* or A grades by the end of Year 13 is high, it should be even higher, given the high starting points of students when they enter the sixth form.
- Your actions to improve results and achieve consistency over time in the sixth form are having an impact. This is seen in the improving value added in, for example, A-level physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics. You also use external information to compare your school's sixth-form progress with other schools nationally. This shows that across a range of courses, students make at least good progress over time. However, in some subjects, including economics, geography and English literature, progress is not as high as it should be. There are also some inconsistencies year on year between subjects. Students, overall, make good progress in the sixth form.
- The second line of enquiry we agreed to look at included how leaders evaluate learning, particularly in relation to how effectively teachers stretch and challenge pupils with 'exceptional abilities'. These were the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- Joint observations show that senior leaders are accurate in their evaluations of

learning. We saw strong examples of pupils being challenged in key stage 3 and in history, physics and Spanish in the sixth form. We also saw some examples where teaching was not stretching pupils enough. Over time, pupils in key stage 4 make excellent rates of progress and attain at the highest possible grades across almost all subjects. The curriculum includes a range of courses, such as classical Greek, computer science and Latin, that pupils say are challenging them. For example, approximately 10% of the national entry for classical Greek comes from the school. Pupils read a range of challenging texts. They read with confidence, accuracy and characterisation.

- Leaders have identified students in the sixth form with 'exceptional abilities'. However, we agreed that when we sampled lesson observation records, not all leaders were rigorous in evaluating how students are typically challenged by teachers to reach the highest A-level grades over time. You have recently launched a new observation protocol to include a focus on challenge and have planned additional training for observers.
- We agreed as the third line of enquiry to look at the school's work in safeguarding pupils. This was with a particular focus on how the school helps pupils to manage stress and ensure their emotional and physical well-being.
- Pupils, and students in the sixth form, were able to give examples of how the school helps them manage stress, for example access to the school counsellor and activities on learning how to 'de-stress'. Pupils speak highly of the impact of peer mentors. Pupils also feel that the way the school organises tutor groups helps different ages of pupils to work together and that tutor activities help make them feel comfortable with each other. Consequently, pupils feel that there are adults and other pupils who they can turn to for support.
- Leaders were able to demonstrate through a variety of case studies how the school ensures that pupils who need support, including from external agencies, are given it quickly. Likewise, the personal, social, health and economic education programme ensures that pupils learn a variety of age-appropriate ways of staying safe, including when online.
- The school fosters good relations and celebrates differences between pupils, for example through the work of 'the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender' group. Pupils integrate well together and are respectful of each other's opinions and beliefs. In the words of one pupil, 'the school is like a second home'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in the sixth form supports more students to achieve the very highest grades by the end of their A-level courses
- all leaders consistently and rigorously evaluate the impact of teaching on progress over time, including for students in the sixth form.

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

Yours sincerely

Sam Hainey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- meetings with you and other senior leaders
- meetings with leaders who have responsibility for safeguarding
- meetings with leaders of the sixth form and a group of middle leaders
- a discussion with two governors
- a meeting with a representative from the trust board and the executive headteacher
- visits to lessons, with a particular focus on the sixth form
- discussions with pupils from key stage 3 and the sixth form
- evaluation of assessment information about students' academic outcomes in the sixth form
- listening to pupils read in Year 7
- considering the responses to 67 staff questionnaires, 239 pupil questionnaires and 178 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents
- reviewing the academy self-evaluation and improvement plans, and examining other documentation as to how the school safeguards its pupils.