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Ms Joy Clark
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Dear Ms Clark

Short inspection of North Chadderton School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2017 with Kath Harris, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in January 2013.

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 carefully structured the senior leadership team so that individuals' skills are matched closely to their roles and responsibilities and used to best effect. Leaders at all levels work well together. They have a very clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and of where further improvement is necessary.

You are rightly proud of the ethos of the school, which is built around the school's five core values of responsibility, reflection, reasoning, resilience and resourcefulness. Pupils' responses to inspectors' questions illustrate they are being encouraged to develop these attributes and characteristics through all aspects of their experience at North Chadderton.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. The majority of pupils said that they are listened to and feel well supported. When pupils work together in lessons, they show a high level of respect for each other's opinions and they articulate their ideas very well.

One parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey wrote: 'I have been happy with the school since my child began there in Year 7. The school provides an excellent learning environment in which I feel children are developed not just academically but also so that they are socially aware and able to contribute

positively to the world outside of school.' Many parents were equally positive. While some parents were less positive in their view of the school, inspectors did not find convincing evidence to support these less-positive views.

Since the last inspection, the school has become an academy, moved into a new building and is due to become part of a multi-academy trust, known as The Oak Trust for Inspirational Learning and Leadership, starting from September 2017.

There have been several changes in leadership roles, including at senior and subject leader level, to further strengthen leadership. You work in partnership with a number of local primary and secondary schools to share good practice, provide support where it is needed and to ensure smooth transition for children transferring from primary to secondary school. Teachers have benefited from this partnership, for example by working together to improve the accuracy of teacher assessment. You have adapted your curriculum so that it better meets the needs of your pupils.

You have made progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the report following the 2013 inspection. You have raised the expectations of teachers, many of whom are using more accurate data effectively to plan learning activities at the right level, so that pupils of all levels of ability are able to make good progress. As a result, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making better progress. In some subjects, teachers are working hard to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to find things out for themselves, to share their ideas and to express their views and opinions confidently. Current pupils make good progress from their starting points, across a range of subjects. You are aware that there is still some variability in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for some groups of pupils, in some subjects. You have put in place rigorous checks so that pupils who are not making sufficient progress are supported earlier.

Following the last inspection, you were also asked to develop pupils' reading skills. You have successfully introduced new reading programmes for pupils in all years, to encourage wider reading, as well as promoting reading across a wider range of subjects. Pupils of all levels of ability are directed to select books containing text that challenges their reading skills at an appropriate level.

You were also asked to improve the quality of teaching and have worked hard to make sure that all pupils experience effective teaching. There is some high-quality teaching in the school. You have increased the rigour with which you check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, consequently, teachers have more opportunities to reflect on their practice with a colleague. Weaknesses are addressed quickly through departmental and whole-school training sessions and one-to-one support. You are aware that there is still some teaching that needs to improve and you are taking appropriate steps to address these few remaining areas of weakness. These steps include developing even more opportunities for teachers to share the good practice that exists within and beyond the school.

You have worked hard since the last inspection to develop further the quality of provision in the sixth form, which is now a real strength of the school. The majority of North Chadderton Year 11 pupils stay on into the sixth form. Students are extremely positive about the impartial advice they receive in selecting appropriate subjects for sixth-form study and when choosing their next steps beyond the sixth form. They are very complimentary about the support they receive from their teachers. Student progress is tracked rigorously, support is provided for students when they are struggling and attendance is closely monitored. You monitor thoroughly all aspects of sixth-form provision. Progress for current cohorts of students is good for both academic and applied general subjects and levels of attendance are high.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of the school's practice. Staff and governors are regularly updated on safeguarding procedures. Staff know how to report any concerns. Record-keeping is detailed and of high quality, showing that staff follow procedures appropriately. The designated safeguarding leaders treat safeguarding concerns with a high degree of professionalism and rigorously follow through referrals to other agencies. They work closely with parents and professionals.

An on-site specialist autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) unit, funded by the local authority, and the school's 'Inspire' department (the school's name for the department that provides specifically for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities) provide nurturing and safe learning environments for some of the school's most vulnerable pupils.

The pastoral team works very effectively to support pupils and to make sure that they are safe. Pupils told inspectors that they know whom to go to if they have any worries. They feel safe in school and are confident that any bullying will be tackled quickly and effectively. Pupils are confident that the curriculum helps them to explore the risks they could face in the local community and online. Parents also agree that their children are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- One of my lines of enquiry was to find out why the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in 2016 was below that of other pupils in the school and nationally. Over the past two years, you have improved the provision for disadvantaged pupils across all areas of the school. Leadership of this aspect of the work of the school is now strong. You accurately identify the barriers to learning for this group of pupils. Plans are appropriately targeted to address the specific needs of individuals. Actions taken are evaluated in terms of their impact on pupil outcomes and governors review and evaluate the impact of the pupil premium expenditure in detail. Currently, disadvantaged pupils make progress close to that of their peers across all core subjects. The most able disadvantaged pupils perform well.

- Outcomes in English have been consistently strong for a number of years and teaching in English is very strong. In 2015 and 2016, outcomes for pupils in mathematics and in geography were not as strong as they were in English and science, and this was a focus for the inspection. You took robust action to tackle weaknesses by appointing better-qualified teachers, strengthening subject leadership and providing more opportunities for teachers to engage in training and share good practice. External reviews, commissioned by governors, have confirmed your own evaluation of these subject areas. As a result of your actions, current pupils now make much better progress. You know that this focus on improving outcomes in mathematics and geography needs to be maintained. You have also been decisive in tackling some weaker teaching and leadership in languages so that more pupils in the current Year 11 are able to study a wider and more-appropriate range of subjects.
- Another of my lines of enquiry was to consider whether attendance and behaviour are good for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You place a strong focus on the benefits of good attendance. Leaders work hard, alongside external agencies, to provide support for pupils whose attendance is low for valid reasons. So far in this school year, the attendance of pupils in Years 7 to 11 in 2017 is in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since 2016 and is now in line with others. School behaviour records show that behaviour is good for all groups of pupils. This was observed by inspectors during their visits to lessons and while observing pupils move around the school between lessons and during social times. The number of fixed-term exclusions continues to be close to the national average. The majority of staff, parents and pupils say that behaviour is good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 say that behaviour has improved since the time of the last inspection in 2013.
- In 2016, pupils who have special educational needs and or disabilities with low prior levels of attainment on entry to the school had made slow progress by the time they reached the end of Year 11. Our focus on this aspect revealed that you are working hard, with a variety of agencies, to ensure that these pupils receive the support they require in order to be successful. Inspectors observed a small group of these pupils being taught in the ASD unit, where they were being extremely well supported. Leadership of the ASD and Inspire units is strong. Teachers are well trained; teaching assistants work closely with teachers to plan suitable learning activities. Alternative courses are provided for some pupils for whom the normal curriculum is not appropriate and there is a strong focus on supporting pupils' emotional and social well-being. Progress information for current cohorts shows an improving picture, but leaders are aware that this remains an area for further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for mathematics and geography are further improved
- the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to be given high profile in the school's action plans so that a higher proportion make faster progress and their attendance continues to increase
- further opportunities are provided for teachers to share good practice so that teaching becomes even more effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Gaunt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your senior leaders and five members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with your school improvement partner. Inspectors conducted several learning walks and had the opportunity to see pupils' work. We met with groups of pupils during the day and took account of 31 responses to the online pupil questionnaire. The 87 responses to 'Parent View', the online questionnaire for parents, and 83 free-text comments were analysed. There were 115 responses to the online staff questionnaire and these were also reviewed.

We scrutinised a range of documentation relating to attendance and special educational needs provision. We also looked at the school's own self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings, information on the academy's website, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.