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Mrs Melany Pemberton
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Dear Mrs Pemberton

Short inspection of Edna G. Olds Academy

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2018, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Under your focused leadership, the school is going from strength to strength. You and other staff demonstrate ambition and drive to improve all aspects of the school's work. Your evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and your plans for improvement focus in detail on the specific aspects that will support further improvement. The academy advisory board and the trust provide effective support. All involved with the school share the same vision of excellence.

The ambition that you and other staff have for all pupils is uncompromising. Pupils make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum. I was struck by the holistic approach you and other staff take towards pupils' learning and development. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced by the wide range of enrichment opportunities the school provides, including in the arts. You promote pupils' personal development in a wide range of ways, for example through the use of yoga to help develop pupils' resilience. Staff very effectively promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to strengthen the role of subject

leaders in bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching. You have successfully addressed this, and continue to develop the expertise of experienced and less experienced staff in the school. Subject and middle leaders are very positive about the leadership training and opportunities you and the trust have provided. Leaders of all subjects check pupils' progress and create plans to bring about further improvements in all subjects. An underlying ethos has been to develop staff's strengths and share best practice by working collaboratively with colleagues in the school and other schools in the trust. The leader for the early years, for example, has benefited from the range of training opportunities provided by the trust. You have identified, however, that more time is needed to ensure that actions to improve standards in the early years are secure and sustained.

You are improving leadership at all levels. Staff work alongside each other and support each other very well. The academy advisory board and staff spoke highly of the regular 'engage' meetings, during which they discuss pupils' learning, meet with pupils and parents, and look at pupils' work to review standards. Leadership is cohesive and forward-looking, and is having a positive impact on raising standards.

Leaders were also asked to improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils reach the higher levels. Leaders are successfully addressing this area for improvement. The vast majority of pupils of all abilities make strong progress in mathematics, and more attain highly. Leaders have ensured that teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, this is not quite as consistent as it could be throughout the school. In writing, leaders were asked to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to redraft their work in order to improve it. You have made certain that leaders have ensured that teachers teach pupils to do this consistently throughout the school. Pupils know how to check their own work and that of others. Teachers also ensure that pupils now write at length in different subjects. On occasion, however, teachers do not challenge some pupils to consistently use grammar, punctuation and spelling that is appropriate for their ability. You have accurately prioritised improving pupils' inference and deduction skills so that the proportions achieving the higher levels in reading are similar to those in writing and mathematics.

Nonetheless, the very large majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who speak English as an additional language and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make strong and rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and more reach the higher levels.

Leaders and other staff have ensured that there is a tangible ethos of mutual respect. Pupils are very proud of their school. They take care over their work. Pupils in upper key stage 2 spoke with pride about their blazers which, they say, 'show we are getting ready for high school'. Staff teach pupils to develop a mature sense of responsibility. Older pupils show a deep understanding of themselves as role models. One pupil said, 'We are the older ones and have to look after the younger ones, so they know how to do the right thing.' Pupils understand well, and embody, the school's 'core behaviours'. When I asked about behaviour, pupils politely told me, 'We know what's right and wrong. We don't need the teachers to tell us.' Pupils' behaviour and conduct at all times of the school day are exemplary. The school's

inclusive culture and curriculum prepares pupils excellently for life in modern Britain. A pupil in Year 6 told me, 'In our school there are people from all over the world... We show respect. Everyone has rights.'

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils spoke with confidence about how the school teaches them to keep themselves safe, for example when online or in relation to road safety. Pupils say teachers respond to any concerns they have. They say that bullying is very rare and, indeed, that such behaviour would be unacceptable to them. Parents I spoke with or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were unanimous that the staff keep their children safe.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's record of recruitment checks and its recruitment processes are thorough. Leaders take timely action when they have any concerns about pupils' well-being. Records are detailed. The trust regularly checks that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff receive relevant and up-to-date training, including understanding their responsibilities in relation to the government's 'Prevent' duty.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make strong progress in their lessons because of sharp, enthusiastic, incisive teaching. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to ask questions to assess pupils' understanding and develop their thinking. Teaching assistants provide effective support. Pupils enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic learners. Pupils are keen to offer their ideas and opinions. Teachers expect pupils to give reasons for, and justify, their thinking.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' learning builds over time. A pupil in key stage 1, for example, explained to me that, 'Today we are writing our ideas because on Thursday we will be writing our poems. It's a sort of practice.'
- We saw in our scrutiny of pupils' work that teachers use visual imagery and physical apparatus well to help pupils gain a secure understanding of mathematical concepts. Teachers provide pupils with work that is matched well to the pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils of all abilities make strong progress. In some classes, pupils describe their learning rather than demonstrate their reasoning skills. Leaders are further refining the school's work to promote pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- In writing, pupils make strong progress in improving their handwriting and the presentation of their work. The quality of pupils' writing is consistently high in all subjects.
- At the end of 2017, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics was well above the national averages, while in reading it was broadly average. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of key stages 1 and 2 were lower in reading compared to those in writing and mathematics. You and other leaders have analysed the possible reasons for this, and have ensured that a well-thought-out strategy is in place to improve standards. The restructured approach

to guided reading was evident throughout the school. Teachers place emphasis on teaching pupils to understand vocabulary. We saw how teachers use class novels effectively as a stimulus for writing and other work. Leaders' and other staff's initiatives to improve pupils' inference and deduction skills are improving pupils' progress and attainment in reading. However, leaders have not yet ensured securely that standards are similar to those in writing and mathematics.

- Over the last five years, standards in the early years have improved each year. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above that seen nationally for the first time during this period. The leader for the early years has a good grasp of the strengths and areas for improvement. Staff provide indoor and outdoor learning experiences that are rich in opportunities to promote pupils' communication and language skills. We observed, for example, children roleplaying 'The Smartest Giant' in the early years. Staff develop children's independence and resilience well. Children are making strong and improving progress in the early years.
- You and other senior leaders hold meetings every half term with teachers to review pupils' progress and attainment in each class. Staff have a clear understanding of how well different groups of pupils are achieving. These reviews include careful consideration of the progress of boys and girls. Staff identify pupils who are not making the progress they should, and rapidly intervene to help pupils catch up. Teaching is very inclusive of all learners. Pupils' work, observations of teaching and learning, and the school's own information about pupils' learning show that there is no schoolwide difference in the attainment and progress of boys and girls, or indeed between any groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers refine and secure their work to develop pupils' inference and deduction skills to improve progress in reading
- they secure and develop further the improvements made in the early years to ensure that children make sustained progress.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I scrutinised a variety of documents relating to: safeguarding; behaviour; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' attainment and progress; staff performance; and the school's self-evaluation document and its plans for improvement. I assessed the impact on standards of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as additional lines of enquiry. I looked at the range and quality of information provided on the school's website. I considered the 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as 12 parental comments made through the Ofsted free-text service.

I met with you, the head of school and middle leaders. I met two members of the academy advisory board, including the chair of the board, and two representatives of the L.E.A.D. multi-academy trust, including the director. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the day. I met with pupils informally during the school day, as well as meeting with a group of pupils. Together with you and the head of school, I observed teaching and learning in six classes. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. I also examined with you and the head of school, pupils' work in a sample of their books.