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Mr Steve Howard
Principal
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Dear Mr Howard

Short inspection of Nene Park Academy

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2018 with Jackie Thornalley, Ofsted Inspector, and Paul Copping, 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 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.

You provide strong and passionate leadership and are eager to give pupils from your local area the best possible education. You recognise and celebrate the diversity of your school community. Your focus on, 'thirty-six languages, one cohort' ensures that pupils and staff at Nene Park Academy work together to deliver your school's five key values: the pursuit of excellence, valuing people, achievement for all, a high-quality learning environment and extending the boundaries of learning. Your 'pledges' programme supports the delivery of your vision very effectively and we observed pupils involved in a wide range of high-quality sessions during one of your regular 'pledges and futures' drop-down days. For example, sixth-form students participated in a high-level debate about charity with a university student, while Year 8 pupils enjoyed a session that explored the links between diet, exercise and health. Teachers share your ambition for pupils to excel across the curriculum. They agree that leaders have created a climate in which they are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.

Since your previous inspection you have ensured that leaders maintain their focus on continuing to improve the quality of teaching. You have made key appointments to the senior leadership team and you have recently established a new teaching and learning team which is providing effective additional support to teachers. Pupils

comment on the strength of teaching at the school, while parents are also very positive about the quality of education that their children receive.

You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and your plans set out clearly how leaders will continue to drive improvements. Pupils receive a good standard of education. Sixth-form students make good progress, while key stage 4 pupils have made overall progress that is either similar to or better than other pupils nationally for the last three years. You are disappointed with some aspects of the 2017 GCSE results, but are confident that your curriculum changes will support pupils to make continued good and improving progress from 2018 onwards.

The Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) and members of the academy council provide you with effective support and challenge. There are strong links across the trust at both governance and leadership levels. This provides you, members of the academy council and school leaders with additional expertise when reviewing your progress and planning for next steps. You are all in agreement of the need to ensure that your most able pupils make greater progress and that all staff consistently implement the new behaviour policy.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Leaders undertake all appropriate checks on staff and these records are scrutinised on a regular basis by a nominated member of the academy council. Staff are well trained and they know how to identify any signs that pupils are at risk. Staff understand the school's systems for reporting concerns and state that safeguarding is a part of the school's culture. Safeguarding records are well kept and any child protection referrals are monitored and followed up robustly.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe through assemblies, tutorial sessions and 'pledges and futures' days that cover topics such as online safety, bullying and child sexual exploitation. They say that the school site is safe and they know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils say that when bullying occurs it is normally dealt with effectively. Those who attend the school's hub for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are well looked after.

Inspection findings

- We pursued a number of lines of enquiry to ascertain whether the school continues to be good. The first question related to the extent to which leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching is accelerating the progress of the most able pupils currently in the school. Leaders now judge the overall quality of teaching using a wider range of evidence than they did previously. Their judgements are now made against the 'Nene Park mark', which is leaders' criterion for high-quality teaching.

- Leaders' judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching are accurate and their tracking shows clear improvements in the overall quality of teaching since the last inspection. These developments were evident in our visits to lessons. Teachers have high expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve and pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils collaborate well and are prepared to take risks to advance their learning.
- Leaders' tracking of progress and scrutiny of pupils' work both demonstrate that the most able pupils still make less consistent progress over time than their peers. Good progress is evident across some subjects, for example French, Spanish and history. However, pupils' work lacks depth in subjects such as science and geography, where progress is not consistent. Overall progress of the most able pupils is improving but is quicker for some cohorts. Staff training has been focused on meeting the needs of all pupils, but leaders accept that the specific focus on the progress of the most able pupils could have begun earlier.
- A second line of enquiry related to how successfully leaders are responding to the dip in English GCSE performance in 2017 and the extent to which they are bringing about improvements to the progress of pupils currently in the school. In 2015 and 2016, progress in English was significantly above the national average and leaders were quick to review the factors that led to the recent disappointing results. Leaders have worked closely with English specialists across CMAT and have implemented a range of actions. For example, the curriculum has been altered so that it is more accessible to all pupils and there have been changes to the organisation of teaching groups.
- Leaders' assessments of current pupils' progress in English are checked across the trust and they demonstrate that pupils are making good progress overall. The work seen in a range of pupils' books supports the views of leaders. Pupils take pride in their work and leaders are able to demonstrate through pupils' work over time that they are making good progress.
- Finally, we wanted to check the extent to which leaders are ensuring that all pupils attend school and behave well. The proportion of pupils absent from school has been above average for the previous three years. Leaders understand the need to reduce overall absence and work closely with families and other professionals, such as the school counsellor, to support pupils. Leaders pursue absence rigorously. They are able to demonstrate their impact through a range of case studies. Although the overall absence of current pupils still remains above average, it is improving.
- Leaders have clear processes in place to support the management of behaviour and they are committed to ensuring that rewards and sanctions are used to good effect. In lessons, and around the school, pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They work well together and are respectful of each other's opinions. The proportion of pupils who receive fixed-term exclusions is in line with the national average and is decreasing, as is the number of recorded behaviour incidents in lessons. However, both staff and pupils acknowledge that leaders' day-to-day behaviour expectations are not consistently applied. Leaders are addressing this issue as they embed their new expectations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils make overall progress across all subjects that is in line with pupils with similar starting points nationally
- all staff manage the behaviour of all pupils consistently and in line with the school's expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Gee
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, leaders, other school staff, members of the academy council, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and groups of pupils. Together with you and other leaders, we made short visits to a wide range of classes to observe teaching, look at pupils' books and to see pupils at work. We reviewed samples of pupils' work alongside school leaders and we visited your on-site provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. We evaluated the school's documents about self-evaluation, development planning and safeguarding, including the single central record and records of child protection. We also considered the 81 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, from parents, the 60 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and the 73 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.