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Mr David Tungate
Principal
Nottingham Academy
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Dear Mr Tungate

Short inspection of Nottingham Academy

Following my visit to the school on 10 November 2015 with Amanda Carter-Fraser HMI and Julia Wright HMI, 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 academy was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the senior leaders and the staff at the academy convey a strong sense of commitment to improving the life chances of the young people who attend. You encapsulated the academy's approach to its work when you told me that 'It's never appropriate to rest on our laurels'. This belief in a constant need to get better, however successful you may have been previously, is apparent in the work of the staff and the work done with you by the Greenwood Academies Trust. It translates into positive attitudes to learning among the pupils and learners.

The academy places much emphasis on overcoming the often considerable disadvantages faced by some of the pupils and learners. You have made it your mission to inspire and to build character in the young people. Your success is apparent in those positive attitudes to learning, confidence, and sense of personal ambition, which were apparent around the academy and in the young people with whom the inspectors met. The pupils and learners are smart and well turned out, showing pride in themselves, which is reflected also in the care that so many take with their work.

You have maintained some of the significant strengths noted at the last inspection of the academy, in particular in relation to the pupils' and learners' behaviour and in the primary phase. Despite its considerable and still-increasing size, the academy feels generally calm and orderly, as a result of well-established routines essential in

a community of such size. The atmosphere is one of a community focused on learning. Nevertheless, you stated to me correctly that, despite a significant reduction, the level of short-term exclusions is not yet low enough; you can point to specific groups, including some pupils who speak English as an additional language, where that is particularly so.

You have tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection carefully. You take rigorous and well-conceived action to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching. As a result, you have improved the quality of feedback given to the pupils and learners; the inspectors saw a lot of evidence in the pupils' and learners' books and in lessons of how feedback is helping the pupils and learners to learn and to make good progress. Similarly, the evidence showed how the teaching is adapted to meet the needs of pupils and learners of differing abilities.

The academy has high expectations of the pupils and learners and sets high standards for them to reach, not only in terms of their behaviour, but also in their academic progress. Generally, the pupils and learners do well, given their starting points, particularly so in the primary phase. Nevertheless, the senior leaders and Academy Trust have been astute in identifying things that need to be improved, to make a reality of your intention not to rest on the academy's previous successes.

You are aware that the effectiveness of teaching is not as good consistently in all parts of the academy as it is in the primary phase. You have identified also that the progress made by some groups of pupils and learners is not as great as others, for example, more-able learners who are disadvantaged. You have, accordingly and appropriately, made it a priority to tackle those things and have set out with some precision the particular things you will tackle first. They include the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in tests by the end of Key Stage 2 and the approaches to the teaching of mathematics in the secondary phase.

Safeguarding is effective.

The academy's safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and are followed carefully by the staff. The leaders with responsibility for safeguarding understand their duties well. The staff are trained regularly and kept up to date with current guidance, so that they are, for example, aware of the different types of risk and possible concerns relating to young people, identified in the most-recent guidance from the government. The school keeps detailed records that show how individual cases of concern are followed up rigorously.

Inspection findings

- The approach to managing the work of the staff is rigorous and reflects the high expectations set by the Academy Trust.

- The teaching is successful in promoting positive attitudes to learning amongst the pupils and learners and in ensuring that they make secure progress, markedly so in the primary phase.
- The teachers welcome pupils and learners into lessons actively, which helps to get the lessons off to a positive start.
- The lessons spark the pupils' and learners' interest. The teachers use a range of techniques appropriate to the different age ranges and use good subject knowledge well, including in the sixth form.
- The teachers use information well about how the pupils and learners are doing. They develop tasks that provide the pupils and learners with a good level of challenge and then to give them clear guidance that helps them to make more progress and pushes them towards more demanding tasks.
- The processes for identifying when pupils and learners have special educational needs are clear and operated carefully. The processes lead to those pupils receiving effective support in lessons and a range of other support that helps them to make good progress with particular aspects of their learning. As a result, these pupils make progress similar to others in the primary phase and the differences with other groups of learners are reducing in the secondary phase.
- The academy takes a similarly careful approach to helping pupils who are at risk of underachieving. The inspectors saw significant examples of successful support for individual pupils.
- The academy can show how differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and learners and other groups reduce over time and, for example, in the primary phase, the rate of progress for this group is better than that for other pupils.
- Nevertheless, your analysis of the information that you hold about how well different groups of learners are doing is not always as searching as it could be. Consequently, the academy does not report on the impact of its work as effectively as it could.
- There are many things other than lessons that the academy does that help the pupils and the learners to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour and to develop increasingly mature attitudes. Notable examples include:
 - in the primary phase: the Playground Peacemakers, the Caring Corner and the school council's project to set up a food bank for the local community
 - in the secondary phase: the basketball academy and opportunities to learn about British values (the learners told the inspectors that respect is a core value of the academy)
 - in the sixth form: the value placed by the learners on the guidance they receive to help them choose courses and the broad range of opportunities for travel, trips, clubs and sport, which provides, as one learner told an inspector, 'opportunities for everyone'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the academy tackles the variations in quality of teaching identified by senior leaders, so that the teaching is consistently as good in all parts of the academy as it is in the primary phase
- the academy acts on the priorities it has identified for different groups of pupils and learners, including improving the progress of higher-attaining pupils and reducing further the level of fixed-term exclusions, and that it monitors the evidence of the impact of its actions more searchingly and reports more fully on the impact.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the different phases of the academy, representatives of the Academy Trust, the designated persons responsible for safeguarding and for special educational needs and with a group of teaching and other staff. They made a series of visits to lessons in all phases and at all of the academy's sites, jointly with the senior leaders, spending time in a variety of classrooms at different times of the day. They examined examples of the pupils' work. They held a range of discussions with a wide variety of pupils and learners, informally when observing breaktimes and during lessons, and formally with groups from the different phases at the academy. They observed the pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the end of the school day and checked for the views of parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, although there were too few for there to be any report. The inspectors examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, behaviour records and policies and the latest achievement and attendance information held by the school.