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Mr Arthur Barzey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Barzey

### **Short inspection of Heron Hall Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 2019 with Rhona Povey, 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 Heron Hall Academy was judged to be good in June 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in January 2018, you have re-established and strengthened a culture of high expectations. Pupils and staff appreciate the stability and sense of direction in the school following a period with a number of changes in leadership.

The school is growing year on year, with 240 pupils in Year 7 compared to the 84 pupils in Year 11. The school is now oversubscribed. You have extended and re-structured your leadership team, which has supported you in recruiting a large number of new staff to match the expansion of the school. This, in turn, has caused you to prioritise teachers' professional development and the induction of new staff. Staff told inspectors that they feel happy and supported.

You have been thorough in your self-evaluation, checking your judgements with external partners. This has given leaders a strong understanding of the areas needing improvement and has led to a number of initiatives. These include the setting of clear expectations for teaching, which are now beginning to be evident in some strong day-to-day practice. The quality of teaching is improving. Pupils recognise this, but they also tell us that there are still occasions where lessons are disrupted by the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils.

The previous inspection report identified inconsistency in middle leadership. You

and your senior leadership team have prioritised the development of this group, providing bespoke leadership and curriculum training. Middle leaders told inspectors that they value the new systems put in place to support them, particularly those that help them share good practice. Senior leaders are systematic in the challenge and support for this group, and they are becoming increasingly able to support you in raising standards.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The comprehensive range of induction and refresher training provided by the trust is supplemented by online and specialist training completed by all staff and governors. As a result, staff speak knowledgeably about the possible risks to pupils and there is a strong culture of safeguarding.

There are clear systems for reporting concerns. These have been communicated effectively to staff and pupils, enabling a timely response by designated safeguarding leaders. The school works well with external agencies. The Safer Schools police officer plays an active part in the life of the school, delivering assemblies to pupils on how to keep themselves safe.

You have redesigned the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme to include topics that teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. Pupils report that there are some rare incidents of bullying. You have addressed this regularly in the PSHE education curriculum, in assemblies and through the school's 'no blame' bullying policy. Pupils are keen to emphasise that bullying is dealt with swiftly if it does occur.

### **Inspection findings**

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to focus on how effectively leaders are improving outcomes for most-able pupils. This is because published examination results show that the progress of pupils with high prior attainment was not as strong as that of other pupils in 2018.
- You have used the school's new teaching and learning policy to introduce a greater level of challenge and support for all pupils in their lessons. Newly introduced strategies are now evident in much of the teaching, with some skilful use of questioning to extend and deepen the understanding of the most able pupils.
- Subject leaders are also focused on improving the teaching for most-able pupils. Their development planning includes subject-specific strategies for raising the level of challenge in lessons. They are establishing routines for tracking pupils' progress that are increasingly effective in helping them to identify when intervention is necessary to raise outcomes for these pupils. However, they recognise that the changes put in place are not yet fully established and have potential for greater impact.
- We looked next at the impact that leaders' actions are having on pupils' progress

in English, mathematics and science. Published examination results showed that pupils were making much less progress in science than they were in English and mathematics.

- Inspectors observed teaching that was typically strong in English and mathematics. This included skilful sequencing of tasks and careful scaffolding of difficult concepts, resulting in pupils making very strong progress.
- The school has found the recruitment of science teachers challenging and some staff are new. Inspectors' observations of science showed some inconsistency in this subject. Some pupils make good progress, reflecting effective teaching, but others underachieve because of the weaker teaching they receive. This was shown, for example, by gaps in their knowledge and disorganised work in their books.
- New leadership in science is being well supported by senior leaders, but, as you acknowledge, it is too soon to see the impact of actions to bring greater consistency to the department's work.
- Finally, we looked at how effective leaders' actions have been in identifying and supporting underperforming groups of pupils. I looked particularly at the progress of boys and Black Caribbean pupils. This is because published exam results show that these groups performed significantly below others. For example, girls outperformed boys by nearly a grade in 2018.
- Leaders have targeted the performance of boys and Black Caribbean pupils using initiatives such as 'Key 27'. This is an academic mentoring programme for a cohort identified from underperforming groups to raise their performance. The progress of these groups is a standing item at departmental and examination review meetings and leaders continue to review their curriculum in order to look for opportunities to further engage these pupils.
- Leaders have implemented systems that allow more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. Middle leaders use this effectively to identify underachievement in Year 11 and, increasingly, for other year groups.
- Your internal progress information shows that the gap between the progress of boys and girls has narrowed, with the gender gap being broadly in line with national figures. There is more of a mixed picture with the performance of Black Caribbean pupils, who are still making less progress than their peers in Year 11. The performance gap narrows significantly further down the school, where this group makes progress that is broadly in line with that of other pupils.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in science is of a consistently high standard to challenge and support all pupils
- there are effective strategies in place to support individual students in improving their behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Avnee Morjaria  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we met with you and your senior team. We met with members of the academy trust, the chair of the governing body and your school improvement partner. We met with a group of middle leaders and two groups of pupils to hear their views about the school. We evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies for keeping children safe, training, safeguarding checks and record keeping. We considered a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and external evaluation, as well as scrutinising pupils' assessment information and behaviour records.