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Mr Juan Hernandez
Headteacher
Norlington School and Sixth Form
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Dear Mr Hernandez

Short inspection of Norlington School and Sixth Form

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2018 with Lisa Gorman, 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At GCSE, pupils' outcomes have shown further improvement. The progress of all groups of pupils in key stage 4, including the most able, is strong. Staff are supportive of your leadership and enjoy being part of the school with its distinctive family ethos.

The behaviour of pupils around the school is calm and orderly. The pupils enjoy being part of the school community. Sixth-form students said that they were proud of their school and they value the support they receive from staff. A small number of parents and carers took the opportunity to speak to inspectors and praised the strong pastoral care their sons receive.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders ensure that the policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust and effective. Staff receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. This covers a range of issues, including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Staff know whom to report to if they have concerns about a pupil. A regular meeting every six weeks helps school leaders identify any pupils potentially at risk. This is in addition to the ongoing monitoring that is in place. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils who may need help.

Pupils who met with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. They said that

bullying is rare and swiftly dealt with by staff. Pupils confirmed that they are taught how to stay safe online. Attendance has improved and is above the national average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is falling. This is the result of effective action being taken by the school.

Inspection findings

- Inspectors met with you at the start of the day to agree the key lines of enquiry. One of these was curriculum change and its impact on pupils' outcomes. Three years ago, the school decided to start teaching GCSE courses from Year 9 onwards. This means that pupils spend two years in key stage 3, rather than three years. Last summer, the first cohort of pupils took their GCSE examinations after the curriculum change.
- Leaders are of the view that outcomes have improved as a result of changes to the curriculum. There is no doubt that published GCSE examination results are stronger.
- Staff are positive about the change because they say it gives them more time to prepare pupils for the new GCSE assessments.
- Inspectors visited classes to look at pupils' learning in key stage 4. We saw evidence of challenging work in English and science. In history and geography, pupils have good opportunities to build on and develop their prior knowledge. For example, in Year 11 geography, pupils deepened their understanding of the rainforest, which had been taught in key stage 3.
- The reduced time in key stage 3 is enhanced by additional opportunities that pupils are given. These include trips and outings, including residential visits. The range of opportunities is wide, including theatre and museum visits. Leaders organise regular 'drop-down' (non-timetabled) days in the arts and culture. Pupils are also encouraged to involve themselves in a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils typically said that they had been on extra-curricular trips, including some residential visits. Sixth-form students are offered additional music and sports, including skiing.
- The second line of enquiry concerned the progress of the most able pupils across the curriculum. This was chosen because this group, although making strong progress, performed less well than their peers at GCSE in 2017. Teachers provide most-able pupils with strong challenge. Leaders ensure that these pupils are introduced to learning materials before lessons through homework. In classes, pupils have focused time to discuss their work. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, pupils were encouraged to perform complex mathematical calculations and to give the answers verbally. This deepened pupils' thinking about problem-solving activities. A pupil in the class told an inspector, 'Lessons are always interactive and we learn a lot.'
- Outcomes for the most able at GCSE have improved. This group now make progress that is as strong as that of other groups of pupils in the school.
- Finally, we looked at the effectiveness of leadership in improving the sixth form. This was because the progress that sixth formers make is below the national

average.

- Students receive strong challenge in the sixth form. In economics, for example, students were given demanding work on the principles of supply and demand. Sixth-form students themselves are positive about the support they receive from their teachers and other staff.
- We found that there is still scope for improvement. You have made recent changes to the leadership of the sixth form. Leaders are developing plans to improve outcomes and increase the recruitment of students into the sixth form. These plans are at an early stage of implementation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- students' progress in the sixth form improves to be at least in line with the national average
- leadership in the sixth form is strengthened further and student recruitment is increased.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Adamson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry, having looked at your self-evaluation of the school's performance. Inspectors looked at documentation on the school's examination performance at key stages 4 and 5. They also looked at attendance, behaviour and exclusion records. Inspectors visited an assembly and lessons, including those in the sixth form. Meetings were held with school leaders and other staff, including the designated safety lead. Inspectors met formally with pupils from Years 7 to 11. The lead inspector spoke with governors and a representative from the multi-academy trust. In addition, inspectors considered responses from the staff survey, pupil survey and Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.