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Ms Jayne O'Grady  
Headteacher  
Sale High School  
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Dear Ms O'Grady

### **Short inspection of Sale High School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2019 with Annette Patterson, 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 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.

The school has been on a journey of improvement since the last inspection. When you arrived in September 2017, you built on the improvements made by the previous headteacher and the school has continued to move from strength to strength.

You have developed a strong leadership team to help you to drive improvement across the school. Governors, leaders and staff work together to give pupils the best opportunities they can, so they are prepared for the next stages of their career.

Pupils' progress has increased considerably since the last inspection. The GCSE published information shows that virtually all groups of pupils made progress above the national average in 2018. Disadvantaged pupils' progress was in line with other pupils nationally.

Current pupils are continuing this trend of improvement. Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils in the school. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make progress in line with pupils nationally. This is because some teachers do not provide appropriate support in the classroom to help them more successfully access the work.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. You provide collaborative training to teachers which encourages them to work together and share resources. Teachers

told inspectors that they enjoy trying new strategies in their classroom and feel that their teaching and leaderships skills have developed considerably through working with their colleagues.

There is a real sense of community across the school. Visitors are welcomed by pupils and adults. During learning, pupils work together to improve their understanding. They listen to each other and give help when needed. They treat staff with respect and follow instructions.

Pupils are typically well behaved in school and most pupils attend school regularly. Despite this, attendance has been lower than the national average and the proportion of pupils that do not regularly attend school has been high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Although most pupils are well behaved, there is a group of pupils who find it difficult to moderate their behaviour. This has led to the proportion of pupils that are temporarily excluded from school being higher than the national average. You have put strategies in place to support these pupils and these temporary exclusions have reduced considerably.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They say that their children are safe, happy and learn well. Parents feel that the pastoral support their children receive is strong and they enjoy school. Parents felt that they receive good information about how well their children were doing in school. They felt that teachers in the school cared about their children.

Governors are knowledgeable and bring a range of skills to their role. They understand the strengths and the areas for development for the school. They have a governors' development plan which they use to hold you to account for school improvement.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve teaching and learning across the school; in particular, to ensure that work challenged pupils and that their literacy skills improved. While there have been improvements in teaching, some teachers do not follow school policies effectively. When this is the case, pupils do not learn as well as they could, and their literacy skills are not fully developed, especially in their work across the curriculum.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is a strength. All staff and governors are trained each year. Updates are provided frequently so staff are promptly made aware of any concerns or changes. Checks on anybody who works in or visits the school are thorough and ensure that only those who are safe to work with children do so.

You and leaders have ensured that staff are aware of the concerns most likely to affect pupils in the school. You have developed strong local links and work closely with parents to provide the best care for children in need. Referrals are prompt and appropriate. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for

purpose.

You are aware that bullying does happen in the school. You have provided pupils with an anonymous reporting process, as well as training pupil ambassadors, so pupils can report concerns easily and safely. Pupils told inspectors, that while bullying does happen on occasion, teachers deal with it well.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection followed several lines of enquiry. The first was how well you had brought about improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. You closely monitor teaching and learning across the school and use this information to provide targeted training to the staff.
- The training you have provided has improved the quality of teaching considerably. There has been an upward trend in pupils' progress since the last inspection. You have encouraged teachers to challenge pupils to think deeply about their work. As a result, pupils recall prior learning and apply it to new situations.
- Pupils' literacy skills have improved considerably since the last inspection and pupils typically write with accuracy and fluency. Pupils use subject-specific technical words appropriately in their work when answering questions posed by their teachers.
- A minority of teachers do not apply school policies consistently during their teaching. Where this is the case, pupils have difficulty improving their writing and recalling prior knowledge.
- The second line of enquiry was about how well pupils with SEND are supported in their learning. Although the progress pupils with SEND make has improved, it is still below the progress of pupils nationally. Teachers have increased the challenge for all pupils. However, they sometimes do not provide the support necessary for pupils to access this challenging work. This is particularly true for pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils make less progress than others.
- My next line of enquiry was about the proportion of pupils that are excluded for a fixed period. You have put a number of strategies in place to help pupils to behave appropriately. As a result, the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period has reduced considerably and is now in line with the national average.
- My final line of enquiry was to see if the rates of pupils' attendance had improved. You monitor pupils' attendance closely and take action when pupils fail to attend. Overall attendance is improving and close to the national average. Despite this, the proportion of pupils that are regularly absent from school remains high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Individual actions are put in place to support these pupils in attending school. As a result, the proportion of pupils that are regularly absent from school is reducing towards the national average. However, the rate of improvement is slow.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers apply school policies consistently to enable pupils to:
  - further consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills
  - better develop their literacy skills across the curriculum
- teachers support more effectively the specific individual needs of pupils with SEND during learning, so these pupils make at least good progress
- the proportion of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or with SEND, who are regularly absent from school continues to fall.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Trafford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Erica Sharman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, information on pupils' performance and attendance, the school's self-evaluation and the improvement plan.

Inspectors met with you and other members of your leadership team. I spoke with the chair of the governing body and to the local authority representative.

Jointly with school leaders, inspectors observed learning in several subject areas and looked at work in pupils' books. We spoke formally and informally to groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. We observed pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and during social times.

We reviewed the 35 responses to the pupils' survey and the 78 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We considered the 67 responses parents submitted to the free-text service as well as the 42 responses to the staff questionnaire.