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Mr Trevor Jones
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Moulton School and Science College

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Matthew Sammy, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders and the governing body have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have made significant changes to the leadership structure of the school and strengthened the quality of senior leadership through recent appointments. You, senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are open and honest about the areas which need improvement. This has enabled you to put in place a focused and appropriate plan to further improve pupils' outcomes. The governing body has complete confidence in your ability to bring about the necessary improvements.

The pupils I spoke with said that they enjoy school. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. There is a purposeful atmosphere of learning in lessons. Pupils respect and trust their teachers, and have confidence in them to support them to do their best.

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked to improve boys' progress to match that of girls, which is consistently above the national average. This has been a whole-school priority. Staff have had training on how to engage and motivate boys in lessons. Boys who are underperforming work with older pupils who mentor and support them. Boys' progress has improved year on year as a result, rising to above the national average in 2015.

Despite a disappointing dip in 2016, the school's assessment information and first-

hand inspection evidence indicate that boys' progress is back on track to improve again this year, at least in line with national expectations.

Last year the school faced problems with the retention and recruitment of staff, which subsequently led to a number of staff changes and new teaching appointments. Leaders have focused on ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as new staff join the school. Senior leaders support subject leaders in identifying areas of strength and weakness and provide additional support for any staff who need it. Leaders share best practice from within the school and from their connections with other local schools and the Swan Teaching School Alliance. This is helping to drive consistency and continued improvement across the school. For example, leaders worked last year with a group of local schools to ensure that the school's assessment of the new English and mathematics GCSEs was accurate.

Subject leaders in English and mathematics have also worked with local subject networks to gain a better understanding of the new GCSE examinations. They have used this to review curriculum content and to ensure that pupils regularly practise and develop the key skills needed for the new assessments from Year 9. The majority of pupils who spoke with inspectors during the inspection were clear about their target grades and what they had to do to make at least the progress expected of them from their starting points by the end of Year 11.

You rightly acknowledge that disadvantaged pupils are not making good enough progress compared to other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils are also absent from school more often than other pupils. You have taken appropriate action to address this. You have brokered advice from external consultants to review how best to use the pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, senior leaders have now put in place individual 'bespoke' support plans for disadvantaged pupils. These are being regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure that strategies are having a positive impact. You have also devised rewards to recognise pupils' attitudes and achievement. All staff recognise their role in improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Although your actions have led to some improvements in disadvantaged pupils' attendance and progress, leaders and the governing body are clear that this improvement now needs to be more rapid.

The majority of pupils who spoke with inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey felt that pupils behaved well and that, if bullying did happen, they trusted their teachers to deal with it swiftly and appropriately. The school's own records on behaviour and bullying corroborate this, and demonstrate that the school's actions are effective in preventing any reoccurrences of poor behaviour. However, a number of parents who responded to Ofsted's free text service expressed concerns about bullying and behaviour at the school. You acknowledge that more work needs to be done to communicate to parents the positive work which the school is doing in this area.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. There is an extended safeguarding team which works collaboratively under the leadership of a highly knowledgeable and well-informed senior leader and rightly makes pupils' safety its highest priority. Team members are all suitably trained and keep their knowledge current through regular online updates. You commissioned an external audit to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. Records are detailed and of high quality. They reflect the determination and tenacity of staff to ensure the best provision and care for pupils. Leaders put in place effective early care for pupils to prevent problems from escalating. They work with external agencies to provide additional support to pupils and their families when needed. All staff receive regular and appropriate training and demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about current issues such as sexting and grooming. Pupils recognise and are understanding of diversity. They are respectful of those who have protected characteristics, for example those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning. This means that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Inspection findings

- The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. Governors acknowledge that last year the pupil premium funding was not monitored closely enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils made good enough progress. They recognise that they have a critical role in ensuring that the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally diminishes more rapidly.
- Leaders have used pupil premium money effectively to fund a breakfast club for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' punctuality, attendance and readiness to learn have improved as a result.
- Leaders maintain a close focus on teaching and learning to reflect the school's commitment to continuous improvement and to support new teachers and subject leaders. Staff have access to a variety of training through your links with local schools and the Swan Teaching Alliance. Teachers also benefit from working in school in groups of three as supportive coaches and critical friends. You are determined to remain outward-facing, so that you can learn from best practice to support further improvements to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Evidence seen during the inspection, in lessons and in pupils' books supports the school's assessment information that most pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that pupils start learning the skills needed for the new GCSE examinations earlier during key stage 3, so that these skills can be practised and secured by the time pupils reach Year 11.

- Leaders have set aspirational targets for pupils to ensure that all pupils make progress at least in line with national expectations. Teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that is suitably challenging.
- Pupils receive good pastoral care to support their well-being. Year 11 pupils who spoke with me told me how much they value access to the school counsellor. They were also unanimous in their praise for the high-quality careers advice and guidance which the school provides for them and which help them to make informed choices about what to do after Year 11.
- Leaders are forging good links with parents to work together to improve outcomes for pupils, for example by involving parents more in pupils' education plans, by organising parental workshops and through the support of a family liaison officer. Some parents expressed concerns about recent staff changes and pupils' behaviour in the Ofsted surveys. Leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to improve engagement and communication with parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupil premium funding is used effectively to reduce the persistent absence and improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils
- the work of the school is better communicated to parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders and representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors listened to Year 7 pupils reading and spoke with a group of Year 7 and Year 11 pupils about their school experience. Inspectors visited a range of lessons across different year groups and subjects; all were seen jointly with senior leaders. During these visits, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspection team scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). Inspectors evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement

planning, attendance, behaviour and bullying logs and minutes of the governing body meetings.

Inspectors took account of the 88 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the 79 responses to the Ofsted free text service, the 100 responses to the staff survey and the 153 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey.