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Mrs Carol White
Headteacher
Shavington Academy
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Dear Mrs White

Short inspection of Shavington Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 2018 with Deborah Bailey, 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have a crystal-clear vision for the school and want pupils to thrive both socially and academically. You have developed a strong and dedicated team of staff, which shares your high aspirations for pupils. Your governors and senior leadership team support you well. Pupils make good progress overall. In 2017, GCSE results showed that pupils' progress in English and humanities and some other subjects were significantly above average. The proportion of pupils who secure places in education or training when they leave Year 11 is above average.

Shavington Academy is a close-knit, caring and inclusive community. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They enjoy school. One pupil commented: 'Teachers care. We are pushed to do our best.' Pupils behave well around the school. In lessons, they show respect for the views and opinions of others. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and each other. Their experience at the school is enhanced by a wide range of clubs and activities such as sport, music and drama. Pupils relish the opportunities to participate in a variety of trips and visits.

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. As one parent commented: 'Pastoral care is great. My children receive fantastic support with their learning and confidence.' Another

parent said: 'Staff are friendly and approachable. My child has settled in well.'

You have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development and have relentlessly tackled underperformance. Together with your governors and staff team, you are successfully managing a significant rise in pupil numbers as a result of the increasing popularity of the school. You have an outward-looking approach and as a local leader of education you use your expertise to support other schools.

Staff morale is high. The very large majority of staff who responded to the online survey are proud to work in the school. Staff welcome the chance to develop their skills. One teacher commented, 'This school fosters in us our love of learning.' Many staff who join as newly qualified teachers progress to become leaders in the school. This 'grow our own' culture ensures a positive impact on improvements in teaching and learning.

You and your leaders check the quality of teaching closely. You have created many opportunities for teachers to work together, including peer observations and learning walks. Teachers use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their thinking. Leaders analyse pupils' assessments and scrutinise their work regularly, so that appropriate support can be given to pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

You have rightly recognised that you need to continue to focus on ensuring that pupils' progress in science improves further. You recognise that you could do more to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend more frequently and achieve the highest standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality. All staff are trained to an appropriate level and receive regular safeguarding updates. Staff are aware of the procedures for making referrals should they have concerns. Vulnerable pupils are supported sensitively, particularly those who are anxious or suffer from mental health difficulties. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies.

Pupils at the school feel safe. Those who spoke with inspectors said that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults in the school will help them if needed. Through the personal, social, health and economic education programme pupils learn how they can stay safe online and in relation to potential risks such as domestic violence.

Inspection findings

- One of the key lines of enquiry during this inspection centred on the curriculum. Leaders adapt the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils. Pupils follow a broad and well-considered curriculum. For example, a second language has been introduced to promote modern foreign languages in key stage 3. The

promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to learn and understand the values of tolerance and respect for those from other cultures and religions. As pupils move through the school, they are given effective careers advice and guidance.

- My line of enquiry relating to the progress of pupils in mathematics and science matched your own concerns. You had already found that pupils did not make good enough progress in these subjects in 2016 and 2017. Challenges with recruitment have made securing good progress for pupils difficult in the past. You have taken action to stabilise staffing and improve the quality of teaching. New teachers are being supported effectively by leaders. You commissioned an external review of mathematics and science provision and are acting on the findings. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and more time has been allocated to mathematics and science in key stage 4. Middle leaders have revised schemes of work in these subjects to meet the demands of the new, more challenging, GCSE courses.
- In mathematics, teachers are now using information about pupils' abilities in their planning to challenge different groups of pupils. The recently appointed advanced skills teacher is adding further strength to the department. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are making stronger progress in mathematics than previously. Teaching in science is not consistently challenging and so some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of in this subject. You recognise that this remains an area for further development.
- As part of this inspection, we looked at the support given to disadvantaged pupils. Over time, there has been a difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics and science. Following a recent external review, the school has focused more on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Staff now actively identify these pupils and provide intervention and support. Work scrutiny, lesson observations and current assessment information show that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making better progress. However, you have rightly identified the need to ensure that the differences in progress diminish further.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and say that they are held to account more closely for pupils' results through regular progress meetings. They value the opportunities to enhance their leadership skills through in-house training and support. Middle leaders are sharing best practice as a means to improve outcomes.
- Governors are committed and bring a range of skills and experience to their roles. They know the school well. Governors are kept well informed through regular visits to the school and meetings with middle leaders. They also receive detailed assessment information. Consequently, they challenge and support leaders effectively.
- My final line of enquiry concerned the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. This was because, in the past, disadvantaged pupils have had a higher rate of absence than other pupils, most of whom have a good record of attendance.

Your new assistant pastoral leaders are building stronger relationships with families to encourage these pupils to attend school more frequently. The pupil premium funding supports eligible pupils in attending the breakfast club and English, mathematics and science support sessions. Leaders reward regular attendance. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on some of these pupils. However, you recognise that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still below that of other pupils nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science so that pupils' progress improves
- they further improve the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection we met with you, other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders and staff. I met with two members of the governing body. I held telephone conversations with the chair of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. We visited a number of lessons to observe learning. Some of these observations were made with school leaders. We scrutinised pupils' work to evaluate pupils' learning over time. We met with a group of pupils and spoke to others in lessons and around the school. We took account of 61 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including 49 free-text comments. We also considered the views of 42 staff. We looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, external reviews and information about pupils' progress. We also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe; records of training; safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.