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Mr Jon Jones
Principal
Bristol Brunel Academy
Speedwell Road
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Bristol Brunel Academy

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2017 with Deborah Wring, HMI, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You provide strong and confident leadership and a clear sense of direction and ambition. Your detailed self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve further. You have the full support of the staff and strong leaders. A culture of ambition in the school is helping to improve standards and outcomes for pupils. Governors are well informed and provide you with a good balance of support and challenge.

Changes you have made to the curriculum are clearly having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. You employ a very effective range of intervention strategies which ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.

Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the positive impact the behaviour policy, 'Right to Learn', has on their progress. They are polite and respectful, wear their uniform with pride and treat each other with kindness. Pupils fully support the school's inclusive policies and practices. The majority of parents believe that the school is well led and that their children are well taught and kept safe.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching in a small number of subjects and, in most, you have achieved this. Where teaching is not yet good enough, you have detailed plans in place to ensure improvement.

You were also asked to improve the attendance of some groups of pupils. For most groups, attendance is now in line with the national average.

The majority of current pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. You have reduced previous differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils significantly. You acknowledge, however, that you still have more work to do to ensure that you help the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to achieve at the very highest levels.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are up to date, meet requirements and are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of good quality. You and other leaders, supported by well-trained governors, teachers and other staff, have created a strong culture of safety which permeates every aspect of school life. Staff work well with parents and carers and with the local authority, when appropriate, to ensure the safety of vulnerable pupils.

Staff with specific responsibilities for safeguarding take great care to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with medical problems, pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of term, pupils from other countries who may speak little English and those at risk beyond the school. There is a strong, personalised approach which parents and pupils value.

You and your staff are clear about the risk pupils face from extremism and radicalisation. You, therefore, keep pupils well informed. You deal with incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils are confident in the measures the school has in place to keep them safe.

Inspection findings

- The school's 'Right to Learn' policy was introduced two years ago and has had a significant impact on the behaviour of pupils and their achievement. Pupils feel that the school is a better place because expectations are higher than before. They feel motivated to do well. They appreciate the care taken by the leadership team to create a positive learning environment.
- A key line of enquiry for the inspectors was the progress made by pupils in all year groups and across a wide range of subjects. Pupils make good progress in most subjects. Attainment has risen in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' basic skills have improved. In a very small minority of subjects, pupils' progress and attainment are not good enough but the leadership team has well-conceived plans to bring about improvements. A significant number of pupils achieve a strong pass in English but not in mathematics, or vice versa. This is a key area for improvement.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Classrooms are well ordered and pupils are keen to take part in activities. Pupils use the feedback their teachers give them to make good progress and respond well to the support they receive.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong and improving. This is because of your focus on identifying and meeting their individual needs, your careful tracking of their progress and your drive to make them independent learners.
- You and your staff pay close attention to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and operate an approach which enables pupils who enter the school with low attainment to catch up quickly. The progress of these pupils was an additional line of enquiry for inspectors.
- You and your leadership team use experience from previous years very effectively to plan provision for the future. Highly organised systems for monitoring and training are used to promote improving outcomes for pupils.
- You are aware that the most able pupils should be making more progress from their starting points. You and your fellow leaders are taking steps to ensure that pupils deepen and reflect upon their learning more frequently. The curriculum offers every opportunity for pupils to succeed. However, at present teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils' ambitions and aspirations to achieve the highest grades.
- A high proportion of the school's pupils are disadvantaged and their progress was the third key line of enquiry. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is due to your leadership team's relentless focus on pupils who need support. In 2017, these pupils' progress was in line with other pupils nationally and better than that of disadvantaged pupils nationally. You and your leadership team are ambitious to enable disadvantaged pupils to make even greater progress. As a result, you are concentrating on strategies to strengthen their aspirations further.
- Inspectors also explored the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing pupils for the next steps in their education. Pupils are well prepared and fully supported in making choices both at key stage 3 and post-16. They have access to a full-time careers adviser. They benefit from a comprehensive careers education programme in personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies. A wide range of well-planned activities increases their knowledge and understanding of the choices on offer.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress made by the most able pupils continues to improve so that more of them achieve the highest grades
- a greater proportion of pupils achieve a strong pass in both English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Steward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with you and your senior team, middle leaders, representatives of the academy council and the chief executive officer of the Cabot Learning Federation. We talked to pupils, both formally in groups and informally around the school. We visited lessons with you and your team to observe learning and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding, attendance and the use of pupil premium funding. We took account of 59 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 58 written comments from parents.