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Mr Mark Harrison
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Dear Mr Harrison

Short inspection of Co-op Academy Swinton

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 2019 with Craig Yates, 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 November 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Leaders and the Co-operative Academies Trust, of which the school is part, promote a culture where each pupil is known and valued. Leaders and other staff take the time to speak with pupils, for example in social time and between lessons. Such positive experiences help to cement the good relationships between staff and pupils and provide an additional level of support to any pupil who may require it.

Pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about various aspects of school life and described many strengths of the school. They feel safe and able to be themselves. Pupils are articulate, confident and keen to be successful in their lives. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that staff deal with issues quickly and effectively. Pupils attend school regularly and most move to education, training or employment when they leave. Inspectors found that the school's values of 'Caring for others ... everyone is valued' were evident in the conduct, behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

Leaders and the Co-operative Academies Trust, including governors, understand the challenges that the school faces and the priorities for improvement. They are focused sharply on refining the quality of teaching and strengthening its impact on

pupils' progress. The trust board, directly and through the local governing body, is increasingly holding leaders to account for the work of the school.

Inspectors looked at the progress that leaders have made in addressing the areas for improvement noted at the previous inspection in November 2015. Teaching is improving because of recent and effective action by leaders to support and challenge staff. Recent successes include pupils' better progress in English. However, pupils' examination results across a range of subjects have remained lower than those of pupils nationally. While some teachers now set demanding work, matched to pupils' capabilities, others continue to accept inaccurate and poorly presented work from pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils do not make strong progress. Inspectors' findings are more fully described below.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure that staff are updated routinely about safeguarding issues, including those which arise in the local area. Staff know how to spot signs of radicalisation, gang-related crime and child sexual exploitation and report any concerns swiftly. Staff pride themselves on knowing pupils well and spotting concerns about pupils' well-being promptly. Leaders make and follow up safeguarding referrals to other agencies effectively. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe from potential dangers, including when they use mobile devices and the internet. Leaders effectively manage the safety of the pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection findings

- The first area that inspectors considered was whether school leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement, so that it was in line with that of others nationally. Despite some improvement in disadvantaged pupils' progress, too many disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress.
- The GCSE results of disadvantaged pupils have been significantly weaker than those of other pupils nationally. In 2018, their results were lower than the national average across the range of subjects that they studied. Assessment information provided by leaders indicates that current disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 continue to have gaps in their learning.
- Leaders have strengthened their use of assessment and monitoring to better pinpoint where staff can further improve disadvantaged pupils' progress. However, this work has had limited impact to date. Although the work of some current disadvantaged pupils shows clear improvement, this is inconsistent throughout the school. As with other pupils at the school, disadvantaged pupils make limited progress where teaching fails to challenge them to think hard. Senior leaders have identified disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 8 as a priority for better teaching and support.

- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve pupils' attendance. For example, disadvantaged pupils' attendance shows an improving trend and is close to the national average. The work of leaders and staff to raise the aspirations of disadvantaged pupils is paying dividends. Almost all those pupils who left Year 11 in 2018 moved on to education, employment or training.
- Inspectors' second focus was to consider whether leaders effectively support pupils' good conduct and attitudes to learning. Inspectors found that that pupils behave well around the school. Pupils enjoy good relationships with one another and with staff, and they wear their uniform correctly and with pride. They arrive at lessons punctually. Leaders recognise pupils' good behaviour through the school's successful reward system.
- Inspectors were struck by pupils' eagerness to succeed in lessons. Pupils were considerate, listened to the views of others and were keen to participate when provided with opportunities to do so. Where teachers apply the school's approach to assessment consistently, pupils review their work, think about it again, and improve the content and presentation as a result. When teachers expect pupils to write with care, pupils' work is usually accurate and well presented. However, the quality of pupils' work varied. Inspectors saw careless mistakes in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar and a lack of accuracy in drawing graphs, charts and diagrams. Although these weaknesses occur at times across most subjects, including in mathematics, they were most prevalent in science.
- Inspectors investigated whether senior leaders ensure that teachers give all pupils opportunities to acquire a deep understanding of the key concepts in each topic. We found examples of some pupils making strong progress. For instance, in English, teachers guided pupils to apply their previous learning carefully. While in most subjects there are examples of staff giving pupils better challenge in activities, there is much variation through the school. In English and in Spanish, pupils benefit from more regular opportunities to think more deeply than in other subjects, so their progress is stronger. Despite these improvements, some teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to think deeply about their learning.
- At the previous inspection, inspectors asked leaders to ensure that staff challenge the most able pupils to make the best progress possible in all subjects. We found that leaders have made some progress with improving this aspect of teaching, but variability remains in how well this group of pupils are learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils make good rates of progress across all subjects
- pupils consistently produce work with care and accuracy
- teachers challenge pupils consistently well across subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Ruddy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with leaders and a representative of the Co-operative Academies Trust, including the local governing body. We spoke with pupils to gather their views about a variety of issues, including safeguarding, teaching and behaviour. We examined a range of the school's documentation, such as the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, assessment information, attendance and behaviour records, the pupil premium funding plans and information about the safeguarding of pupils. We considered the 28 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 21 written responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's free-text facility. We took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils and the 39 responses to the staff survey. We conducted learning walks across a range of subjects and year groups. Some of these learning walks were conducted with school leaders. We scrutinised the work in a sample of pupils' books, jointly with school leaders.