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Mrs Linda Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jones

Short inspection of Piper Hill High School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018 with Lisa Morgan, 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 outstanding in March 2013.

The school continues to be outstanding.

Since the last inspection, the school converted to academy status in March 2015 and formed a new multi-academy trust in 2017. Leadership has remained stable throughout all these changes. Piper Hill is an outstanding school where exceptional things happen.

'My child's life and future [have] changed for the better because of you all.' This is how one parent described the impact of you and your team's work. You and your staff do everything possible to meet the needs of your pupils. It is clear that what you do works. Pupils make exceptional progress from their starting points and all pupils leave the school fully prepared for the next stage of their learning. No one gives up on any pupil.

It is your influential and impressive leadership that has created a culture which never rests on its laurels and always strives to be better. You are very clear that this has happened because of the challenge and vision of governors, the support of your leadership team and the unflinching dedication of staff. Teamwork is the key to the success of the school. Staff are relentless, ambitious and humble. As one of member of staff commented to me, 'I love the school. I am surrounded by amazing colleagues. It is an honour to work with the pupils. There is never a day that I don't look forward to work.'

At the last inspection of the predecessor school, you were asked to keep a close check on the planned actions to ensure that they are successful. The tracking

systems that you have in place are precise and used by teachers to inform their planning. This leads to lessons that expertly match the needs of pupils, many of whom have considerable medical and significant learning needs. Your leadership allows teachers to teach without the distraction of administrative tasks that can be time consuming and unproductive. The well-being of staff is a high priority. This is reflected in the very low turnover of staff and the opportunities that you provide for them to pursue their career aspirations. Potential is spotted and nurtured. You and your governors are committed to ensuring that the next generation of leaders and teachers comes from within your current staffing.

Governors and members of the academy trust share your compelling dedication and commitment. They know the school and work to see that it continuously improves. Governors are astute and hold you to account with an equal measure of challenge and support. There is no complacency whatsoever.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils in this school are safe and said that they feel safe because of the vigilant support they receive. Leaders have created a culture in which safety practices and procedures are robust. Staff work together to make sure that the pupils are kept safe. They often go above and beyond in their actions when they may have concerns. Leaders' work with external agencies and parents and carers is exemplary. This culture is captured by one of the pupils who commented to inspectors, 'I come to school where I smile, laugh and learn. I know that I am safe.'

Inspection findings

- Attendance of individual pupils continues to improve. Leaders' actions are specific to the circumstances and challenges of each pupil. While the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than leaders would want, this is because of unavoidable and often serious medical reasons. Leaders ensure that any pupils who are absent are given all the support and time that they need to catch up on the learning that they have missed.
- Leaders have planned the curriculum with the upmost consideration for the needs of the pupils. The school does not have a curriculum for all. Instead, it designs its curriculum for each individual pupil. All pupils make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and achieve qualifications that allow them to move on to the next stage of their learning.
- Leaders have been creative in their design of the curriculum. The creation of a computing curriculum is particularly impressive and very much enjoyed by the pupils. This initiative is an example of leaders giving staff the opportunity to pursue their interests and specialisms for the benefit of the whole school community.
- Leaders give language and communication development prominence in all aspects of learning. One way in which leaders have done this is by promoting reading and spending considerable resources on materials that are suitable for

the pupils. This has helped to stimulate and engage the pupils and improve the progress that they make in their literacy skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the outstanding quality of provision continues for pupils at the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior leaders, and members of the governing body and I met with the chair of the multi-academy trust. With senior leaders, inspectors conducted a learning walk, visited all classes and had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work. Inspectors met with a group of pupils during the day and took account of the recently undertaken parental and pupil surveys. We scrutinised your assessment information, school improvement planning, behaviour records, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices. We also reviewed documents relating to the curriculum and looked at the quality of education, health and care plans.