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8 November 2018

Mr Nelson  
The Hazeley Academy  
Emperor Drive  
Hazeley  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK8 0PT

Dear Mr Nelson

### **Short inspection of The Hazeley Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 2018 with Patrick Harty and Ian Tustian, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your approach to leadership is characterised by your principled and determined pursuit of high standards in all areas of school life. You balance effectively your drive for excellence with the well-being of staff and pupils. Therefore, staff at the school trust and respect you and the leadership team. Morale is high at your inclusive school and everyone at the school shares your determination to provide the best for each pupil.

You have created a stimulating and challenging ethos at the school, which enables pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well. In lessons, we saw pupils working hard and persevering with challenging topics. Pupils present their work carefully and respond effectively to teachers' regular guidance. However, you and your team are not complacent, and you are implementing ambitious plans to help pupils make even greater progress.

The behaviour of the great majority of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils are proud of their school, wear their uniforms smartly and take good care of the school environment. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy school, and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance. The staff at the school provide a range of well-attended clubs and activities during break and after school. These extra

activities which support academic and personal development are valued by pupils. One pupil, voicing the opinion of a group of pupils, said, 'The best thing about the school is the respect that teachers have for pupils and we have for our teachers.'

Leaders have developed meticulous systems to access and track pupils' progress. Consequently, teachers can provide prompt and effective help to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. For example, if pupils need help with reading they are given extra lessons until their reading matches the strong reading skills of other pupils at the school. As a result of this, and other examples of focused support, pupils' progress is accelerating steadily in all year groups.

Since the last inspection, you have refined your systems to monitor the quality of teaching and check how well it contributes to strong progress. As a result, you, together with the senior leaders and governors, have an accurate view of the school's many strengths and where improvement is possible. For example, you know most pupils continue to make strong progress in mathematics, English and science. You also know where you can make further improvement, such as in helping pupils make more rapid progress in humanities subjects.

Your staff and governors are fully committed to a relatively new whole-school initiative designed to enthuse and motivate pupils and promote exciting and effective learning. This has involved training teachers to be able to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding through detailed questioning and challenge. Pupils are also helped to develop their study skills, so they can make rapid progress, even when work is difficult. During the inspection, we saw evidence that supports your evaluation that this approach is beginning to improve the rate of pupils' progress.

The sixth form is led strongly and provides an inclusive and encouraging environment where students enjoy learning. The carefully designed curriculum includes a wide range of academic and vocational courses that are well matched to students' abilities and aptitudes. As a result of effective academic and pastoral support nearly all students make strong progress in the sixth form. Students are successfully prepared for a wide range of higher education, apprenticeships and employment. The reputation of the sixth form in the community is rightly strong and the number of applications to join the sixth form is increasing.

Governors provide strong challenge and support to you and other leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is possible, such as accelerating the progress of pupils who find academic subjects difficult. Governors take a professional and reflective approach to their roles, for example regularly attending relevant and up-to-date training. Since September 2018, your school has become a founder member of a new multi-academy trust, the 5 Dimensions Trust. The trustees of the multi-academy trust are planning to work with school leaders to raise achievement further within the trust.

Pupils, parents and carers speak highly of the school and most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said they would recommend the school to other parents. One commented that, 'The ethos of the

school combines high expectations with a friendly and caring approach – what more could a parent ask for?’

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Governors and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed, up to date and of high quality. Before appointing staff, leaders rigorously carry out all the required employment checks. All staff and governors are trained effectively on how to keep pupils safe from abuse and sexual exploitation, and in the ‘Prevent’ duty.

A dedicated team of highly skilled staff works with determination and sensitivity alongside pupils, parents and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils’ welfare is a high priority for staff, who are well trained and knowledgeable about the risks faced by young people. Pupils told inspectors that staff are approachable and that they know an adult they can turn to if they have concerns.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for managing their own safety. Pupils said that they learn about how to keep safe and the importance of respecting the rights of others. Pupils’ personal development and well-being, including their mental health, have a high priority and are well provided for at your school. Leaders are rightly planning activities to develop further pupils’ understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we focused on the following lines of enquiry: does the key stage 4 curriculum meet the needs and abilities of all pupils; how effectively are leaders accelerating the progress of boys to match the strong progress made by girls; how successful are leaders in reducing the variation of outcomes in the sixth form?
- Currently, pupils prepare for their GCSE examinations over three years at key stage 4. Nearly all pupils are guided to study a modern foreign language and either geography or history. A few pupils who find academic study difficult take one fewer GCSE subject and they are given extra help to achieve in their other GCSEs. This has been mainly effective as overall pupils have made strong progress in the last three years and nearly all pupils transfer successfully into education or training at the end of Year 11. However, leaders have correctly recognised that low-attaining pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities may make better progress with different styles of courses. There are well-advanced plans in place to introduce vocational and applied courses in design, creative and technical subjects from next September.
- Boys at the school make the same or slightly better progress in some subjects than is made by boys nationally. Teachers have been given valuable training on ways to help boys learn. This training has been effective; as a result, leaders’

current assessment information and the work inspectors saw in lessons and pupils' books show that boys now make more rapid progress. In lessons, inspectors saw boys and girls working well together with boys making sensitive and appropriate contributions to class discussions. Leaders are rightly continuing to focus on accelerating the progress made by boys until it matches the very strong progress made by girls.

- The head of sixth form has skilfully led the sixth-form team of teachers through a period of significant change in the content of post-16 courses and the way students are examined. Students' progress is monitored regularly so teachers can provide swift and appropriate additional help to support students at risk of falling behind; as a result, most students are retained at the end of Year 12. Leaders' current assessment information and the work we saw in lessons and students' folders show that students make consistently strong progress across a wide range of subjects. Leaders are not complacent and constantly seek ways to improve the sixth form further; for example the head of sixth form is currently working to make the taught tutor programme more interesting and relevant.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to accelerate the progress of lower-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities by introducing vocational and applied courses are implemented and evaluated
- current investment in developing learning behaviours results in all pupils making the same impressive progress as some groups do currently.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Turner  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, leaders, governors and staff, and spoke to groups of pupils, both formally and informally. We visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, accompanied by senior leaders, and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. I and my colleagues observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. We considered documents about safeguarding, attendance, current pupils' progress and governors' work. The outcomes of a pupil questionnaire, the staff survey, and 167 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were also considered.