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Ms Alison Johnston
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Dear Ms Johnston

Short inspection of The Clifton Centre

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2018 with Linda Jones, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In partnership with the executive headteacher and a well-informed management committee, you have ensured that the school continues to provide well for pupils who experience social, emotional and mental health needs. Your aims for pupils to 'make good their potential and maximise their chances of a successful and happy future' have been realised. This can be seen in the small number of pupils returning to mainstream education, the range of external accreditations achieved by recent leavers, and the high proportion of pupils who have moved on successfully to further education, employment or training. You have achieved this in the midst of a number of challenges, for example, a steady increase in the number of pupil referrals, staff changes and the removal to temporary accommodation prior to your move to new premises in the near future.

In a recent questionnaire survey completed by parents and carers, they confirm that you and your staff keep their children safe and free from bullying. Typical comments made by parents include: 'staff have been very supportive and consistent', and, 'fantastic with communication and anti-bullying.' Pupils spoken to say that they feel more secure when in a small-group setting. They say that staff understand them and give them the chance to express their feelings and opinions. There is high staff morale and they have a strong commitment to meeting the complex needs of the pupils they teach and support.

You and your staff ensure that pupils show tolerance and respect to adults in school, visitors and each other in line with British values. You provide opportunities

for pupils to gain rewards for their good behaviour, attitudes and attendance. Alongside a good personal and social education programme, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced, for example when encouraged to discuss the social consequences of drug and alcohol misuse. While attendance remains a continuing concern with many pupils, case study examples show that most pupils improve their attendance compared with their previous records in mainstream school. This is because of the efforts you, staff and other agencies make to re-engage pupils and their families with school life.

Since the last inspection, you have ensured that the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved. The appointment of staff with specialist subject knowledge has helped to ensure that pupils engage well. Staff have also undertaken professional development, which has improved the quality of teaching. As a result, the vast majority of recent leavers gained a GCSE grade in mathematics.

You have developed working links with local secondary schools. For example, there is shared decision making when identifying pupils at risk of exclusion. Other headteachers have developed trust in you and your staff because of the support that you offer to schools to re-integrate pupils back into a mainstream setting. The professional development you and your team offer to mainstream colleagues in developing effective behaviour management strategies is greatly valued.

A finding of this inspection was that leaders' skills in measuring the impact of school improvement are not as precise as they otherwise could be, for example when planning for the use and impact of pupil premium funding when addressing specific barriers to pupils' learning. The management committee would then be able to hold leaders to account even more fully. Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching does not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on outcomes for pupils. The inspection also found that the current assessment systems for reading are not refined enough to inform teachers' planning for pupils' next steps in education. There is also an insufficient focus currently upon timetabled provision of science or humanities courses for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements continue to be effective on each of the three school sites. There are regular quality assurance checks on the four alternative providers used to engage pupils in practical learning experiences. There are consistent and effective arrangements to check in and monitor visitors on each site. Staff recruitment procedures are robust. All management committee members have had Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Risk assessments ensure that pupils are safe in school or when involved in off-site visits. Staff and governors are up to date in their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Staff use and apply this knowledge to great effect when managing the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils, for example, in their safe use of the internet or teaching them

about the dangers of alcohol or drugs misuse during personal and social education lessons.

Leaders ensure that vulnerable groups, for example, children looked after, receive high-quality care and support. Good child protection, attendance and behaviour records help provide the intelligence to check the school's impact upon pupils' well-being.

Inspection findings

- You have taken appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. Inspectors observed good attitudes and strong engagement from pupils when attending mathematics lessons. Good-quality questioning from teachers and higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) ensured that pupils were appropriately challenged. For example, when learning about the properties of circles, pupils were asked about the relationship between the diameter and radius of a circle. They were able to deduce that the radius was half the length of the diameter. Pupils demonstrated confidence in learning about new topics, for example when developing an understanding of how to work out the area of a circle by applying a formula. As a result of improved teaching and support, outcomes in mathematics have shown an upward trend since the last inspection. This has been achieved due to the strong leadership of mathematics. However, senior and middle leaders who monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not sufficiently evaluative when making links between the impact of teaching and pupils' responses and learning. Also, teachers' assessment of reading lacks precision with regard to the planning for the needs of individual pupils in lessons.
- In terms of the wider curriculum, there is good provision for design technology, art, construction, and hair and beauty. Displays in art and outcomes at GCSE confirm good provision and outcomes in this subject. Inspectors saw pupils engaged in and enjoying lessons in physical education, food technology, art, and personal and social education. Pupils engaged well when challenged to extend their thinking to develop their imaginative writing.
- Courses offered provide equal opportunities for a range of needs and abilities. The range of qualifications gained includes entry level to higher grade GCSEs. Pupils have achieved functional skills awards, for example in number and measure. BTEC awards are offered in design technology and construction, hair and beauty, hospitality, sports and leisure. There are also opportunities for pupils to gain an award on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. However, there is a lack of clarity about the courses available in science and the humanities.
- Management committee members are well informed about school improvement through termly reports provided by the head of centre. These cover a range of aspects, including safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and pupils' progress. However, the management committee does not have access to precise enough information about the planned impact of agreed school improvement actions in order to hold leaders fully to account.

- Minutes of management committee meetings confirm that members enquire, for example, about trends in fixed-term exclusions. They ask for more detailed information to show the impact of school interventions, for example regarding how the attendance of pupils is improving.
- There is a shared view among committee members, the local authority's lead officer and an external consultant that the school continues to provide a good education for its pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- are more precise in measuring the impact of school improvement actions, for example in the planning for the use and impact of pupil premium funding to overcome barriers to learning
- tighten the monitoring of teaching and learning, so that it is more evaluative and helpful for teachers to improve their teaching
- refine the systems for assessing pupils' reading abilities on arrival at the school, so that teachers can use this information to inform their planning
- review the curriculum to make it clearer what options are available to pupils in science and the humanities.

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

Yours sincerely

Jon Ashley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the team met with you, one of your senior leaders and the executive headteacher who oversees all the Salford pupil referral units (PRUs). Inspectors conducted joint observations of lessons with the head of centre, executive headteacher and a senior teacher at the main Clifton Centre site and at the Clifton Green Hub. A meeting was held with two management committee members and school's local authority school improvement partner. Telephone conversations were held with the chair of the management committee and another member of the management committee. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, in their folders and on displays. They observed pupils on the school corridors and at breaktime. Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's review of its strengths and areas to develop, the school development plan and

information about pupils' ability levels, progress and outcomes. They also looked at documentation relating to safeguarding (including safe recruitment of staff and risk assessments), behaviour and attendance, and management committee reports and minutes of meetings. They considered written reports about the school from an external consultant and local authority officer. Inspectors spoke informally with some pupils at the two sites visited to gain their views about the school and their overall care. Inspectors considered the 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, or to the pupil survey. However, inspectors looked at a recent questionnaire survey of parents conducted by the school.