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Mr Scott Garrity
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Scott Garrity

Short inspection of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 2018 with Harkireet Sohel and Lynn Cox, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have high expectations and strive to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. Under your leadership, there is a clear-sighted focus on improving GCSE outcomes, combined with a deep-seated moral commitment to serving the needs of the young people in the area, especially the most vulnerable. You rigorously check and evaluate all aspects of the school's work and plan effective actions to tackle identified weaknesses. The staff share your vision and work hard to maintain the school's many strengths and improve the school further. Staff value the support they receive, your focus on their well-being and the 'open door' policy that allows them to discuss both professional and personal issues with senior leaders.

Pupils behave well and respect each other, staff and visitors. They are positive about the school and feel supported, both academically and pastorally. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the breadth of opportunities offered both during the school day and after school. A typical comment from a parent reflects this commitment to enrichment opportunities: 'There are so many extra-curricular opportunities to develop each child and my daughter's confidence, self-esteem and positivity have been developed greatly.'

The governing body uses its breadth of skills and experience to hold leaders to account effectively. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They analyse and interpret data accurately and ensure that the school's resources

and any funding it receives are used well to improve outcomes for pupils. The governing body ensures the school maintains and strengthens its links with the local community.

The previous inspection report identified that all teaching should be at least good and that all teachers, including those in the sixth form, set tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to ensure they reach their full potential. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching, including the use of professional development and support from another school. Lesson observations by senior and middle leaders, as well as the views of pupils have been used to measure the impact of this work. As a result, there is now more consistency in the sharing and use of best practice, for example in the use of questioning in lessons and the setting of homework. This has led to pupils of all abilities making greater progress in most subjects, particularly English and mathematics. However, leaders recognise that they have been less successful in bringing improvements in science. An improvement plan is being implemented by leaders in order to address this.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that a culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Staff are clear about safeguarding systems, processes and their responsibilities. Detailed and accurate records are maintained securely. Recruitment checks and the maintenance of the school's record of these are secure. All staff and governors have been trained on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. The governing body routinely checks that all processes and policies are secure and that the school's records are thorough and complete.

One governor provides expertise on how to improve the security of the school site. Consequently, there has been an investment in technology in order to minimise any associated safeguarding risks. A dedicated team of staff, coordinated by the designated safeguarding leader, supports vulnerable pupils. These staff work with determination and sensitivity with pupils, parents and external agencies. Robust procedures are in place to follow up absence. Child protection practice is effective and timely action is taken to seek external help for pupils when need be. Pupils continue to attend school and achieve well. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children are safe at school. Similarly, responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire overwhelmingly supported the view that pupils are safe at the school. Pupils confirmed this. Pupils spoke to inspectors confidently about who to go to if they have a concern, the school's anonymous reporting of safeguarding incidents via the school website and about their understanding of school safeguarding processes, such as lockdown. They said that bullying is rare, and is dealt with consistently and effectively, should it occur.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders' actions are continuing to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, in 2017, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils was closer to that seen nationally for all pupils.
- Information provided by the school indicates that disadvantaged pupils are continuing to make good progress in all year groups and across a range of subjects. Where teachers plan challenging learning specifically for disadvantaged pupils, progress is faster. Additional teaching and specialist support for disadvantaged pupils, together with higher expectations in English and mathematics have resulted in improved outcomes for these pupils. However, improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have not been maintained and have fluctuated widely from term to term.
- The rationale that informs the school's strategy for the use of the pupil premium funding is clear and appropriate. Inspectors saw examples of effective actions and approaches identified in the development plan and there is evidence that these are helping to achieve the desired outcomes. However, the analysis of each of the strategies is not detailed enough to give leaders an insight into which is having the greatest impact on the progress of these pupils. There are plans to put this into place for next year.
- The development of teaching, learning and assessment in science is not as secure as in other subjects. Teachers do not use the school's policies consistently. In some science lessons, teachers did not use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to challenge pupils, especially the most able. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils are weaker than in other subjects. Leaders and governors are taking action to improve the quality and consistency of teaching. More curriculum time is planned for triple science in key stage 4.
- Leaders in English and mathematics continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to reduce the gap in the outcomes for girls and boys. Boys' literacy remains a priority and further strategies are being put in place to raise standards in reading. A new leader of literacy will co-ordinate additional support and share best practice in this area from September. In mathematics, teachers have been allocated to specific groups to raise the performance of girls. Inspectors observed challenging teaching, a targeted approach to engaging girls, a strong focus on the use of vocabulary and language and the effective use of teaching assistants in lessons. Current data shows that overall, girls are making stronger progress than previously in mathematics. The gap in outcomes for girls and boys for Year 11 has been reduced significantly compared with results in 2017.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has led to an improvement in the attendance of these pupils. There has been a significant drop in the levels of absence and persistent

absence of this group as a result of more effective liaison between home and school, and with the support of external agencies. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now taught in mainstream lessons, rather than in the resource base. Evidence from the school's records suggests that learning alongside their peers is enabling these pupils to make faster progress. Teachers use learning activities that are well matched to these pupils' needs and this has also had a positive impact on attendance.

- Outcomes for students in the sixth form continue to be strong. Leaders have ensured that best practice in teaching in key stage 4 continue to be embedded in the 16-19 study programmes. Students of all ability are challenged and make good progress as a result.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers in science adhere to the school's policies and support pupils to make faster progress
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves so that it is consistently in line with that of other pupils
- they analyse the impact of pupil premium spending on the progress of disadvantaged pupils in sufficient detail to identify the strategies which are being most effective.

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 Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we met with you and other leaders as well as members of the governing body. We met with the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and a group of teachers. We met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their learning. We visited mathematics, English and science lessons, in a range of year groups, with a member of the leadership team. We also visited a tutor groups. We examined a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school development plan, information about current pupils' progress and attainment, analyses of both attendance and behaviour, child protection records and the current pupil premium plan. We also considered 305

responses from Parent View and 49 responses from members of staff to the online staff questionnaire.