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16 October 2018

Mr Paul Eckley
Headteacher
Manor Academy Sale
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Dear Mr Eckley

Short inspection of Manor Academy Sale

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 2018 with Bernard Robinson, 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 good in November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since taking up your appointment in June 2016, you together with the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Sovereign Trust, governors and senior leaders have created a welcoming and nurturing environment. You have developed a strong team of middle leaders and staff who are committed to ensuring that pupils with diverse needs achieve their full potential. You clearly fulfil your mission to enable pupils to 'be the best they can be'. Pupils make good progress from different starting points.

Pupils are happy and eager to start school in the morning. They have positive relationships with each other and their teachers. A typical comment was: 'Teachers are kind and respectful.' Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities which help them to develop their health and well-being, such as swimming and outdoor activities. Pupils are also involved in charity work and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. Pupils learn about British values, including respect for differences.

The overwhelming majority of parents who made use of the free-text service were very positive about the school. One parent commented, 'The headteacher and staff know children well.' Another parent said, 'My child feels valued and is motivated to learn.' Every parent who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school.

You and your senior leadership team have an honest and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You have improved staff morale. The large majority of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. Staff feel listened to and value the professional training and support that they receive. Recent training has focused on a range of topics, for example the autistic spectrum disorder and diversity.

We discussed some areas for further development. You have introduced a curriculum to support pupils' social and emotional needs. There are encouraging signs of positive impact, but we agreed that this needs to be further adapted for pupils with the most complex needs. We also discussed how the careers provision for pupils in key stage 4 could be further improved. You are aware that there is work to do to ensure that higher-ability pupils are challenged further.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding pupil's well-being. Safeguarding records are detailed. The single central record is up to date and there are appropriate checks in place to ensure that pupils at the school are protected. Staff and governors have completed training in safeguarding. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse. They know what to do if they have any concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders have ensured that there are very effective links with a range of external agencies to support pupils.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their rates of attendance are high. Leaders, together with the attendance support officer, track pupils' attendance diligently and work closely with families. Pupils said that they are safe in the school and parents agreed. Pupils report that bullying incidents are rare and that when they occur, staff deal with them effectively. School documentation confirms this.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which was how well the school manages behaviour. Leaders have created clear routines and boundaries which help pupils to improve their own behaviour. Staff provide good role models for pupils in the way they talk and conduct themselves. The school is a calm and purposeful environment. Pupils behave well at breaktimes and lesson change-overs. Any minor incidents of challenging behaviour are managed well. In lessons, pupils show respect for teachers and work hard.
- You have developed a broad and balanced curriculum with the needs of pupils in the mind. For example in key stage 3, you have created an alternative curriculum group for pupils with profound autism. This is helping them to become ready for mainstream education. The curriculum provides many opportunities to enhance pupils' communication, independence and life skills. These include visiting the local supermarket to buy food ingredients which pupils use to cook food in school. Pupils study a wide range of subjects, including art, design technology, drama, humanities, physical education and science. In key stages 4 and 5, pupils can choose from accredited work-related and vocational courses such as BTECs.

The curriculum supports pupils to make good progress from their starting points. However, the curriculum is not as well adapted for the needs of the increasing number of pupils who have complex needs.

- Leaders set challenging targets for pupils which are matched to their levels of need. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to plan activities, which helps pupils to learn and raise their self-esteem. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to provide clear explanations. Staff teach pupils how to use alternative methods of communication, such as pictures and information technology. Pupils were able to use their phonic skills well to read and sound out letters. They take pride in their work, and their books are neat and well presented. Inspection evidence indicates that most of the activities set by teachers are closely matched to the ability of pupils. However, higher-ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some year groups by the tasks that they are given.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide small-group sessions and speech and language therapy. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are identified quickly and given additional support. As a result, disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers.
- The CEO of the Sovereign Trust has supported you very effectively in your efforts to improve the quality of education in the school. Governors are enthusiastic and passionate about the school. They challenge and support leaders well. Governors visit the school regularly to find out for themselves about the quality of teaching and learning. They receive presentations by staff and middle leaders on key areas such as work experience and the curriculum.
- Transition is managed well as pupils move through the school. Pupils have taster sessions in a range of option subjects, which helps them to decide on the most appropriate courses to study. Leaders provide good careers education and guidance in the sixth form. Pupils receive unique work experience placements which develop their confidence and prepare them for the wider world. For example, pupils in the sixth form undertake a work placement at Manchester Metropolitan University, where they have the opportunity to work in the library, mail service and catering and facilities management. All pupils go on to further education, training and employment. Guidance and support about careers choices is not as effective for pupils in key stage 4. Leaders have been planning to make improvements. This is now about to be introduced across key stage 4.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to build on the recent improvements in the curriculum so that learning is even better adapted to pupil's complex needs
- higher-ability pupils are challenged consistently across year groups so that they reach the highest standards of which they are capable
- information, advice and guidance is extended to pupils in key stage 4 so that they can have a greater sense of their career pathway.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection we met with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders and teaching and support staff. I met with two members of the governing body, the CEO and chair of the board of trustees of the Sovereign Trust. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. We visited classrooms, jointly with you or your assistant headteacher, to observe and engage with pupils about their learning. We met with a group of pupils from across the school. We scrutinised pupils' work to evaluate pupils' learning over time. We took account of 24 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including nine free-text responses. We also considered the views of 34 staff.

We looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, external reviews and information about pupils' progress. We also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe; records of training; safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.