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Mr Daniel Connor
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Connor

No formal designation inspection of Challney High School for Boys

Following my visit with James Dyke, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10–11 December 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about aspects of the quality of education.

Evidence

To evaluate the quality of education, we carried out deep dives in English, science, geography and design technology. In each subject, we visited lessons in both key stage 3 and key stage 4, scrutinised pupils' work (this included listening to pupils read) and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also scrutinised pupils' work in history and French. I made visits to lessons in other subjects on the second day of the inspection. I met with the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Chiltern Learning Trust, trustees and members of the local governing body. I also held telephone conversations with representatives from alternative providers attended by a very small number of pupils.

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We reviewed records of pupils' attendance and behaviour and spoke to pupils and staff to gain their views on behaviour and the quality of education, and considered the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. We met with the headteacher, senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo).

Context

Challney High School for Boys is an average-sized secondary school. The number of pupils on roll is increasing.

Almost all pupils are of Asian or Asian British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in the highest 20% of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with SEND who are not in receipt of an EHC plan is in line with the national average.

The school became an academy in April 2011 and is part of the Chiltern Learning Trust. The predecessor school, Challney High School for Boys and Community College, was judged to be outstanding at its inspection in May 2007.

The school is part of the Chiltern Training Group and Chiltern Teaching School Alliance, which provide training and initial teacher education across Luton, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Main findings

Leaders, trustees and governors have ensured that the school continues to provide an outstanding quality of education.

The quality of education at Challney High School for Boys transforms pupils' life chances. Pupils often arrive in Year 7 without having reached the required standards at the end of Year 6. From these lower starting points pupils access a rich, well-planned curriculum where teachers plan lessons expertly and enthuse pupils with a love of learning. This ensures that pupils go on to achieve well at the end of key stage 4. By the time pupils leave in Year 11, they are well qualified and well prepared, as they move into high-quality post-16 education, or take up training and employment opportunities.

Collectively, you have established a culture of high aspirations and expectations that are shared by leaders, staff and pupils alike. Leaders, the trust and governors actively seek the views of pupils to provide a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of pupils. As a result, the school's curriculum wholeheartedly supports pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils experience a broad and vibrant curriculum in key stage 3, which provides exceptional foundations for learning and achievement in key stage 4.

In classrooms, teachers use their subject expertise to plan lessons and set work that effectively consolidates and deepens pupils' learning. Teachers are highly ambitious about what pupils can achieve, and choose and adapt learning activities accordingly. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils have access to, and

benefit from, the same high-quality experiences as their classmates. Highly effective additional support is provided for pupils with the greatest learning needs. Skilful, well-trained adults ensure that these pupils learn well and develop the skills to do so with increasing independence. This helps all pupils to become confident learners and achieve well, particularly those pupils with low prior attainment. Teachers enthuse pupils to aim high and achieve well. As a result, pupils have a very strong work ethic. They are eager to participate and are interested in their learning. They want to know more. This contributes to the very strong progress that pupils make across the curriculum.

Given some pupils' lower starting points, you and your senior leaders place great emphasis in developing pupils' literacy and communication skills. This helps all pupils, including those who are in the early stages of learning English, to access the curriculum. You successfully promote a love of reading, both in school and at home. Pupils use the well-resourced library extensively. All pupils study a variety of interesting and challenging texts, such as the works of Shakespeare and Dickens, alongside a broad range of poetry. Those pupils who need more support to catch up in their reading receive incisive and effective support. This helps them to read with increasing confidence, fluency and comprehension. These pupils develop an enjoyment of reading. Teachers use pupils' love of reading to promote actively the skills of writing across subjects. Pupils write often, extensively and for a variety of different purposes, across all subjects.

The time allocated for learning in key stage 3 is used extremely well. Leaders have thoughtfully constructed subject plans that fulfil the aims and scope of the national curriculum programmes of study. Topics are carefully chosen to capture and build upon pupils' interests. Leaders have considered carefully the knowledge, understanding and skills that they want pupils to develop. Learning in different subjects is very well, and logically, sequenced. Pupils have opportunities to revisit important concepts. This ensures that they develop a very secure understanding of the basic components needed to develop deeper understanding in the range of national curriculum subjects. Teachers use homework and online learning to very good effect to maximise pupils' learning.

In key stage 4, pupils study and achieve qualifications that mean that they are very well placed to move into further education or a wide range of careers. Pupils appreciate the range of subjects they can study. They see their relevance to future careers and aspire to achieve as well as they can because they value education and the doors that it opens for them. An above-average proportion of pupils study subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). You, along with governors and the trust, have deliberately made this decision about the curriculum. You feel that this gives pupils a broad academic base upon which they build successfully. As a result, pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 11. Pupils speak positively about the comprehensive information and guidance that they receive about future careers, education and apprenticeships. Very many pupils progress to higher-level

study in sixth-form colleges or colleges of further education. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training.

Teachers make the most of curriculum opportunities to support pupils' personal development. A well-planned personal, social and health education programme, complemented by assemblies, visiting speakers and a range of visits and trips, strongly contributes to pupils' preparedness for life in modern Britain. Pupils are proud to take on a range of responsibilities, for example as prefects, house captains, sports leaders and members of the student executive. They are also proud of work they have done to support charities and the local community. You ensure that all pupils, including the most disadvantaged, have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including sports clubs and cultural visits.

Despite the extensive strengths in the curriculum, leaders know that there are areas that need further refinement. Music is not taught as a discrete subject in key stage 3. Pupils learn about different aspects of music through their 'cultural literacy' lessons and house assemblies. Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for pupils to follow interests in music, should they wish to do so. Pupils learn to play musical instruments and participate in performances. Leaders know that compared with other subjects, the key stage 3 music curriculum is not as exceptional as what is offered in the remainder of the subjects.

Pupils fully embrace the school's motto of being 'ready, respectful and safe'. They strive to be the 'five star Challney student' in all respects. Pupils know that bullying and other unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. Incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are rare. When they do occur, staff deal with them firmly and effectively. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes contribute strongly to their learning. Pupils' enjoyment of school and learning is reflected in their regular attendance. Very few pupils are frequently absent from school.

School leaders are not complacent. Leaders, including subject leaders, check regularly on the quality of education provided. Leaders act quickly and effectively, to maintain high standards and address any variations in outcomes for pupils. For example, firm yet thoughtful action taken to improve the curriculum in science and the humanities has resulted in improved teaching and outcomes in these subjects. This ensures that, across the curriculum, teaching is highly effective and helps pupils to make strong, and often very strong, progress and achieve well.

The trust uses its regular programme of monitoring to provide support where it is needed. For example, subject leaders have opportunities to share best practice with other schools and access external training and professional development events. This ensures that leadership and management and the quality of teaching remain highly effective.

Staff are highly appreciative of the many opportunities available to improve their subject knowledge and practice through access to high-quality training and development. Newly qualified teachers are particularly well supported in developing their practice. Staff feel valued and trusted. They appreciate the steps that you and other leaders take to maintain staff wellbeing.

Safeguarding in the school remains effective. Not only do leaders and staff undertake all statutory obligations well, but often go 'above and beyond' to identify and support pupils and their families, at the earliest stages, who may be in need of additional help. Leaders make referrals and secure the involvement of external agencies swiftly to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

External support

Leaders work with other schools to provide support and training. This has helped subject leaders in developing further their own knowledge, skills and expertise.

Priorities for further improvement

- Enhance further the depth and range of opportunities for pupils' experiences of learning music in key stage 3.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector