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Ms Linda Gooden
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Dear Ms Gooden

Short inspection of King Edward VII School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 2018 with Her Majesty's Inspector Barry Found and Stephen Rogers, 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in September 2016, you have determinedly focused on developing the quality of leadership in the school. To achieve this, you have made significant changes at senior and middle leadership levels, and to governance. As a consequence of this lack of complacency, you are now building a more aspirational culture in the school.

Supported by governors, you have a clear vision for the school. You are determined that your pupils will achieve as highly as possible. To bring this about, you acted decisively to address those areas which required attention. Principally, you have restructured the senior leadership team so that you have the right people in the right roles. You are now able to hold leaders to account. Additionally, you and the chair of governors have led the reconstitution of the governing body so that governors have the necessary skills to support and challenge school leaders. As a result, leaders have an honest and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

You have also acted quickly to begin the further development of middle leadership as a powerful engine for school improvement. You have implemented a new system for the gathering and analysis of information about how well pupils are doing. This enables leaders to identify the actions they must take to help pupils who fall behind to catch up. This more consistent approach is enabling you to effectively hold middle leaders to account.

You have acted to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. More robust systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, and taking action when it falls below the 'expected school standard', are now in place. Consequently, although there is occasional variability, teachers' planning in most subjects and years challenges pupils at the appropriate level, especially in English, science and modern foreign languages, and for middle achievers. There is also evidence of strong standards of presentation in many pupils' books and folders.

You rightly identify the progress of disadvantaged pupils as a priority for the school. You have ensured that teachers take account of disadvantaged pupils in how they organise their classroom seating. You have also commissioned an external review of the impact of how you have used your pupil premium funding. You acknowledge that there is still work to be done in ensuring that the pupils who are disadvantaged make better progress.

You also accurately and honestly acknowledge that standards in geography, languages and art have dipped recently. As a result of firm action around the quality of teaching, and in some cases leadership, standards in these subjects are beginning to rise again, although you acknowledge that there are still improvements to be made.

In the sixth form, leaders' actions have delivered an improvement in students' achievement. In 2015, students' achievement at A level was below the national average. As a consequence of appropriate guidance of students on to courses and effective teaching, standards are now in line with the national average.

Since your appointment, you have also taken action to address declining attendance and rising persistent absence and fixed-term exclusions. As a result of this resolute action, rates of attendance are improving and the use of fixed-term exclusion is declining. Pupils speak positively about the impact of the new 'Consistent Conduct Policy', which has led to improved behaviour, and of the high expectations around good attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's processes for recruiting staff are sound, and the records of the appropriate checks made about staff are also in order. Leaders ensure that all adults who work in the school are up to date with safeguarding training, including non-teaching staff.

Your designated safeguarding leader, together with the wider safeguarding team, acts with single-minded determination in responding to safeguarding matters. There are effective links with relevant external agencies and the school's plans for its most vulnerable pupils are strong, including for pupils who are looked after. When pupil need is urgent, you do not wait around for the appropriate support to be provided

externally, but you get on and organise it yourselves, such as drama therapy and a counselling service.

Pupils told us that bullying is rare, but that they trust the adults in school to resolve the matter should it occur. They told us that the school is a tolerant and supportive community, where pupils are safe to be themselves.

Pupils also told us about the ways in which you educate them about how to keep safe. For example, they have received talks from the fire service about the potential consequences of dangerous driving, and from the police about knife crime. They have had helpful guidance and advice about keeping safe when online. They also spoke positively about the education they received from a local charity about homelessness, its causes and its impact.

Inspection findings

- As a consequence of your focus on further improving the quality of teaching and learning, there is a strong ethos of pupil engagement in lessons. Standards in languages, for example, are beginning to improve as a result. In Year 7 Spanish, for instance, the teacher's use of the target language, coupled with high expectations, resulted in pupils acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- The school's information about pupil progress in humanities points towards an improved picture for outcomes in the external examinations in 2018, compared with outcomes for Year 11 in 2017. There is evidence of this improving picture. In Year 8 religious studies, for example, pupils gained new knowledge about the life and impact of Desmond Tutu because the pitch of the work was appropriately challenging. In Year 8 history, the teacher's effective planning led to a high level of engagement with the work of Joseph Lister. Work in Year 7 and Year 8 geography showed evidence of pupils making progress over time, although their skill in applying their new knowledge across a range of tasks was less embedded.
- There is variability in the extent to which pupils are clear about what they need to do in order to improve. We saw some very strong evidence of pupils being able to articulate how to get better grades, such as in Year 11 health and social care, Year 11 drama and Year 8 English. In Year 11 art and Year 11 computer science, some pupils could articulate what they needed to do in order to improve, but others were less clear and could only say generalised things, such as 'revise more' or 'work harder'. Pupils told us that there is some inconsistency in how well their next steps are made clear to them.
- It is clear that you have made the progress of disadvantaged pupils a high priority, as evidenced in seating plans for every lesson and teachers' awareness of who these pupils are. However, we did not see any strategies in classrooms which have resulted from this information. You have, though, implemented some specific strategies for supporting disadvantaged pupils outside lessons, with the intention of raising the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; indeed, your pupil progress information points towards improved outcomes for disadvantaged Year 11 pupils in 2018. You acknowledge that there is much more work to be done here, hence your commissioning of an external review to support you further.

- In the sixth form, there is very effective teaching across a wide range of subjects, such as chemistry, economics, computing, business studies, psychology, sociology and mathematics. This is characterised by strong subject knowledge on the part of teachers, well-planned lessons which engage students and challenge them, and a clarity around what they need to do to improve.
- Following a period of declining attendance and increasing fixed-term exclusions, your actions have resulted in an improving picture. As part of your senior team restructuring, you appointed leaders with specific responsibility and accountability for attendance and behaviour. This led to a 'big push' on attendance, with a much more detailed and analytical approach to the use of absence data. As a result, rates of attendance are beginning to improve. Pupils confirmed that good attendance is now much more of a focus in school, and that leaders take action when pupils are absent. You acknowledge that disadvantaged pupils are overly represented in absence figures and that this remains a priority for you.
- In order to address low-level disruption, you instigated a review of the school's behaviour policy. As a consequence of drawing a line in the sand, fixed-term exclusions increased for a period. However, they are now declining. Pupils told us that behaviour is better around school and in lessons as a result of the new 'Consistent Conduct Policy', although they said a small amount of disruption still exists, a view supported by a few parents and carers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils are improved further
- there is greater consistency in pupils' understanding of what they need to do in order to improve
- the work to improve standards in humanities and languages is maintained.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Shaw
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with members of the governing body. An inspector met with a group of subject leaders. Members of the inspection team met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5 and also spoke informally with them around the school. Inspectors met

with the leaders responsible for safeguarding, teaching and learning, pupil premium funding, and attendance and behaviour. We conducted joint visits to lessons with you, the leader for the sixth form and a senior leader. During these visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with pupils about what they were learning and their progress. Inspectors also visited lessons without senior leaders. Inspectors looked in detail at pupils' books and folders, both with and without senior leaders present. I took into account results from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View (154 responses), including the 141 free-text responses. We looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, safeguarding records, behaviour and attendance records, including bullying logs, pupil assessment and progress information, and other documents available on the school website.