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Steven Jefferies
Headteacher
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Dear Steven Jefferies

Short inspection of Henley in Arden School

Following my visit to the academy on 15 November 2017 with Peter Kent, 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 academy 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 academy since the last inspection. There is a universal view among staff, pupils and governors that the academy has improved since the last inspection. You and your new leadership team have brought renewed energy to the academy. We were repeatedly told that there is now a sharper focus on ensuring that everything at the academy is done well. You have high expectations of your pupils and your staff and are committed to continuous improvement in all areas of academy life.

Since the last inspection, the academy has built on its strengths. Pupil attainment remains high and above national averages. Pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. They have good attitudes to their work and are well behaved. You have also successfully addressed many of your identified weaknesses. The progress made by groups of pupils is carefully checked in all year groups, and there are targeted interventions for groups that are falling behind. Your most-able pupils make good progress, although you are still striving for them to do better. Teaching is generally good, although on occasions teachers do not provide pupils with challenging enough activities.

The thoroughness of the analysis of how different groups of pupils progress academically is not yet evident in the academy's analysis of behaviour. As a result, leaders could not easily identify whether rewards and consequences for good and poor behaviour respectively were distributed fairly between all groups of pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils were considerably more likely to be excluded from

school than their non-disadvantaged peers, and developing a better understanding of the behaviour of different pupil groups will help leaders address the differences more effectively.

You are proud that your academy is so inclusive, and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are effectively supported to integrate fully in the school community. The academy's commitment to sustaining a broad, inclusive curriculum, with a focus on performing arts, along with ensuring that all pupils understand your core values, enhances the inclusive nature of the academy. The inspection took place during the academy's kindness week. This provides a highly visible opportunity for your staff and pupils to think of others. In a Years 8 and 9 assembly, student leaders clearly articulated the importance of caring for others and encouraged their peers to contribute to the academy's food bank appeal. The assembly was warmly received by pupils who clearly share the same values.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, take their responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously. There is a genuine focus on developing a culture of safeguarding across the academy, with posters reminding the school community that safeguarding involves everyone. Leaders report regularly to governors and safeguarding is regularly discussed at governing body meetings. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Well-trained team members work closely together, recognising that issues in behaviour, attendance and SEN feed into a deeper understanding of how to keep children safe. You have supported this by creating a physical space where these teams can work more closely together in supporting your most vulnerable pupils. Pupils reported that they feel safe in school and have a member of staff to turn to if they have concerns. All staff have received appropriate training across a range of areas, including the risks associated with keeping pupils safe from extremism. The curriculum has been reorganised this year to create more extended opportunities for pupils to understand the issues around staying safe and well.

Inspection findings

- In 2016 and 2017, Year 11 pupils at the academy made progress in line with national levels, although there was some variation between different pupil groups and different subject areas. In 2017, pupils made very good progress in English, languages and humanities. However, pupils made less progress in computer studies, business studies, drama and film studies. Leaders have acted rapidly to address the concerns in these areas. Detailed reviews are under way, using external support to ensure the necessary level of specific subject expertise. Additional support has been provided to the teachers in those subject areas and current data suggests that pupils are doing well across all areas of the curriculum.
- A small group of pupils studying vocational courses in construction and engineering at a local college also did poorly. The academy has recognised that it

did not track the progress of these pupils carefully enough and has put a more rigorous monitoring process in place for current Year 10 pupils undertaking similar courses.

- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made considerably less progress than their non-disadvantaged peers. Leaders have thoughtfully addressed this issue, carefully targeting additional funding to activities that are rigorously assessed for likely academic impact. There is a clear focus on ensuring that all staff know their disadvantaged pupils. The progress of these pupils is carefully tracked. Additional teaching is provided in English and mathematics, class teachers intervene with additional support and disadvantaged pupils are prioritised for extra help in attending school regularly. As a result, in 2017 disadvantaged pupils made good progress and did as well as other pupils in the academy and all pupils nationally.
- Teachers create learning environments in which pupils work cooperatively and are keen to make progress. There is consistent use of 'the big question' to set the context for the lesson and engage pupils in their learning activities. Pupils value the feedback given by teachers. Leaders agree that, on occasions, the planned learning activities do not provide enough challenge for pupils.
- Leaders are committed to continuing to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that pupils receive consistently good teaching. A new approach to professional development has been introduced. Teachers receive training and support that is carefully matched to their needs. A regular session of sharing of good practice takes place every week to reinforce an element of the teaching strategies highlighted in the academy's development plan. All staff participate in a coaching programme to improve an element of their practice.
- Governors are proud of the academy and its standing in the local community. They share leaders' high expectations and regularly challenge leaders in formal governing body meetings and in informal visits to the academy. They have confidence in the rigour of the academy's self-evaluation and understand the areas in which the academy still needs to improve.
- Since the last inspection, the academy has instigated new data systems that include very thorough tracking of pupils' performance in all year groups. The collated data is easily accessible and provides heads of department and class teachers with accurate information about which pupils or groups of pupils need additional help. A new role of progress leader has been created so that achievement data is reviewed holistically, so that pupils who have fallen behind in a number of subjects receive targeted intervention. The academy has been successful in reducing the achievement gaps between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged and the most able and other ability groups. In 2017, boys did less well than girls. In the most recent tracking data, this gap was closing but is still the subject of close monitoring by leaders.
- Since the last inspection, attendance has shown a year-on-year improvement. Disadvantaged pupils attend broadly in line with others although they are still more likely to be persistently absent. The academy has appointed a dedicated attendance officer to support the work of improving attendance and has been effective in raising the profile of good attendance with parents and form

teachers.

- A new behaviour system is in place that provides same-day text messages for parents if their child has received any consequences or rewards. The number of exclusions required for incidents that are more serious is declining, although disadvantaged pupils are still more likely to be excluded. Leaders recognise that an earlier, strategic review of behaviour data may help target interventions to avoid this happening in the future.
- There is a robust quality assurance programme in place to help deliver greater consistency across departments so that improvement priorities are based on very secure first-hand information. Leaders undertake a learning walk through school and observe lessons every day. Evidence from these visits, more formal observations of teaching, book reviews and assessment tracking are used to identify departments and teachers in need of support. As a result, leaders are confident that the quality of teaching and learning in the academy continues to improve.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the academy's understanding of poor behaviour is enhanced by a more thorough analysis of the behaviour of different groups of pupils
- they address the remaining inconsistencies in teaching so that all teachers plan lessons that will provide enough challenge to pupils of all abilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah James
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, your senior team and members of the governing body. We visited lessons across a wide range of subjects to observe learning and we looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We scrutinised documents, including safeguarding policies, governors' minutes, analysis of pupils' achievement, and attendance records. We spoke to groups of pupils and observed pupils at break and lunchtime. We took account of the 65 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and considered the 45 staff and six pupil responses to the Ofsted survey.