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14 July 2014

Mr Andrew Goulding
Principal
Hinchingsbrooke School
Brampton Road
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3BN

Dear Mr Goulding

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Hinchingsbrooke School

Following my visit to your academy on 11 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors gathered a range of evidence including:

- observations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of students' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- scrutiny of documentary evidence
- discussions with leaders and staff.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Behaviour and safety are good.

Context

The number of students currently on roll is 1879. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is half the national average and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is low. A below-average proportion of students are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of disabled students and

those who have special educational needs, including those supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly higher than that found nationally. The proportion of students who leave or join the school other than at the start of the academic year is close to the national average. Twenty teachers are leaving the school at the end of this term, and all nearly all have been replaced for the start of the autumn term. Eight of the new teachers will be newly qualified.

Behaviour and safety of students

The inspection took place on a personal development day during which normal lessons were suspended and students carried out project work based on a variety of subjects and themes around 'creating change'. This was also a non-uniform day for which students made a financial contribution to raise funds for a chosen charity. Students report that school uniform rules are usually strictly enforced.

Students move around the academy sensibly, usually with a sense of purpose and they interact with each other and members of staff respectfully. Typically, there is a good staff presence around the school during break and lunchtime, as well as before and after school. Students feel safe and are clear about how to report any incidences of bullying should they occur.

During the inspection, students were generally engaged in their learning and listened to each other's views and contributions well. I observed powerful contributions from students when discussing racism against the Gypsy Roma Traveller community. Students listened to each other well and showed tolerance of each other's views. Lessons are occasionally disrupted by low-level disruptive behaviour which is linked to weaker teaching. This happens more often in lessons which are targeted at lower-attaining students. Older students believe that behaviour has improved over time.

The revised rewards and sanctions system has reduced the number of recorded behavioural incidents and is understood well by students. The academy's management of students' behaviour has improved, and you analyse rewards and sanctions by student groups which enables you to identify any emerging trends. You have removed the seclusion room and the 'internal exclusion' room. This places greater responsibility on classroom teachers and subject leaders to implement the rewards and sanctions policy. However, students believe that some teachers implement this more consistently than others.

The Gateway School which is located in the school grounds has a positive impact on students at risk of exclusion or who present challenging behaviours. I saw these students demonstrating positive behaviour and engaged in their learning during my visit.

Staff in the academy are clear about your high expectations for behaviour and safety. Teachers model positive behaviour in the classroom, as do the academy's senior leaders. Although most students and parents and carers are aware of actions taken by senior leaders to secure a high standard of behaviour and safety, they are not always clear about the reasons for these and how these strategies fit into your vision for the academy.

Priorities for further improvement

- secure consistency among staff in implementing the academy's rewards and sanctions policy
- ensure that students and parents are kept fully informed about any changes to rewards and sanctions and behaviour management systems, and how these changes fit into your future vision for the academy.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc Chair of the Governing Body