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6 November 2014

Mr Phil Keay
Headteacher
Hetton School
North Road
Hetton-le-Hole
Houghton le Spring
Tyne and Wear
DH5 9JZ

Dear Mr Keay

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Hetton School

Following my visit to your school on 5 November 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 the 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 school.

Evidence

I considered evidence including:

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

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action to maintain good standards of behaviour and students' attitudes to learning.

Context

Hetton is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of students who are supported at school action is average. The proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are also

average. The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. A very small minority of students are educated part time, off site, at Sunderland Pupil Referral Unit. Since the last inspection there have continued to be changes in staffing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

- Action being taken by the school's leaders is resulting in improved attendance and a reduction in exclusions.
- At the time of the previous inspection, attendance was too low. Since then, it has improved markedly for all student groups. It is now at or near the national average and recent school tracking data suggest this trend is continuing. This is because leaders at the school have focused very effectively on a range of systems and approaches to help ensure students attend school regularly. This involves close working with parents, coupled with effective support from the local authority.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the levels of fixed-term exclusion were too high. Since then, although significantly reducing, they still are. The school continues to address this issue and there is clear evidence that the number of fixed-term exclusions is continuing to fall. There have been no permanent exclusions from the school in the last four years.
- In lessons, students' behaviour is now generally good. They arrive punctually, are well prepared and engage with tasks quickly. The majority respond well to their teachers. They are able to talk with enthusiasm about their work and take pride in what they do.
- Staff deal promptly with any low-level disruption using the clearly set out school-wide approach. Although rare, there is some persistent low-level disruption. This usually occurs when students are unclear what they have to do next or they are disinterested in what is being taught.
- Across the school, students interact very well with each other and with teachers and other adults. The large majority is polite, thoughtful and respectful. They move around the school with care and consideration for others. Adherence to the school's uniform code is good.
- There is a clear and shared school approach to discipline and rewards. It is rooted in mutual respect with a clear focus on developing good learning habits. Students report that they welcome the clearly set out rewards and discipline structure because it helps them develop good attitudes to learning and to each other.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the different types of bullying and report that bullying is rare in the school. When it does occur they say it is dealt with promptly.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe online and there is a carefully targeted programme of events including assemblies and work in class about aspects of e-safety.

- The displays around the school are good and there are clear and attractive posters and examples of students' work that emphasise the school's approach to learning, behaviour and safety.
- The school has an inclusion room for addressing short-term misbehaviour. Although this helps students to understand that poor behaviour will always have consequences, being sent to the inclusion room interrupts students' learning because the work that they do in the room is not related to their classroom studies.
- The school also has a flexible in-school provision for students who need a longer period of support to improve their behaviour. This approach deals carefully and precisely with the needs of students and returns them quickly and effectively to their mainstream lessons. However, this provision does not adequately support students' learning and progress as well as it should.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that a review of the use and purpose of the inclusion room and of the in-school flexible provision takes place. This should address very carefully whether these provisions are complementing students' classroom studies so that progress does not stall.
- Ensure that leaders and governors at the school continue to work relentlessly to reduce the level of fixed-term exclusions by continuing to work closely with students, parents and outside agencies.

I am copying this letter to the Executive Director of People's Services for Sunderland, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans

Her Majesty's Inspector