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11 March 2015

Mrs Carolyn Blundell
Principal
Outwood Academy Adwick
Windmill Balk Lane
Woodlands
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN6 7SF

Dear Mrs Blundell

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Outwood Academy Adwick

Following my visit to your academy on 10 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

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 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

The inspector considered evidence including:

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

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

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the academy's previous inspection.

Context

There are 1064 students at the academy. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special needs is also above average. Those supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Almost all students are White British. The proportion of students who join and leave the academy other than at the usual times is above average. There have been no significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There is a 'zero tolerance' approach to poor behaviour at the academy and the academy's behaviour policy is well understood by staff and students. The academy's behaviour management system, known as 'consequences', is used consistently by teachers across the academy. This was evident in all lessons seen during the inspection.

In a range of lessons observed, across subjects and year groups, students worked very well together. They engaged positively with tasks and activities set and particularly enjoyed taking part in discussions and practical activities. Students listened carefully to their teachers and teaching assistants and were keen to do their best. There is a positive ethos evident in lessons and teachers have high expectations of students' achievement and behaviour.

Students respect their teachers and also work well with their peers, particularly in group tasks. For example, in a science lesson, younger students, under the guidance of the teacher and teaching assistants, worked carefully together on a practical experiment, following the teacher's instructions to also ensure safe practices were observed.

In nearly all lessons seen, teaching captured the students' interest well and this promoted positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. In a minority of sessions, where some younger students were distracted or not fully concentrating on their work, teachers skilfully used behaviour management strategies to ensure students were quickly brought back on task. Teachers commented on how the behaviour management systems supported their work in promoting learning in the classroom. Lessons are regularly visited by senior leaders throughout the day.

The academy's approach to behaviour management has resulted, in recent years, in fixed term exclusion rates that are high. This is also the case for specific groups of students, including boys, those eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs, supported at school action plus. Current figures indicate a reduction overall and for these groups, particularly for those students with special educational needs. However, the figures remain high when compared to the national average. Regular and careful scrutiny of the pattern of exclusion across these key groups is now needed in order to reduce the figures further. There have been no recent permanent exclusions at the academy.

Academy leaders take a rigorous approach to monitoring punctuality and attendance. As a result, attendance has continued to increase over time. The proportion of students who are persistently absent shows a significant decline and is now much closer to the national average. The academy's achievement data also shows a continuing picture of improvement.

Vulnerable students are very well supported by the academy, particularly through the work of the inclusion team. A personalised approach and the use of alternative provision, short behaviour courses, The Bridge and the Personalised Learning Centre facilities have resulted in significant improvements in behaviour, achievement and attendance for a number of students across the age range. Inclusion leaders balance effectively the use of the 'consequences room' with this extensive range of provision, particularly for those students deemed to be at risk.

At social times, students act responsibly both outdoors and in the dining area. Students were observed chatting and sensibly enjoying their social time. Adult supervision is appropriate and includes teaching staff, sixth form students and lunchtime supervisors. Students commented on how the 'staggered' approach at break time and lunchtime, that includes different year groups attending either assemblies, vertical mentoring groups or lessons while others have a break, has helped to improve behaviour further.

In discussion with students, they demonstrated a good understanding of what bullying is, including the use of derogatory language. Students are clear about who they can report this to and indicate that any incidents are dealt with swiftly. Academy records support this view.

Observations at the beginning and the end of the day also reflect the academy's expectations of behaviour. Students were purposeful in making their way into the academy and were smartly dressed in their uniform. Similarly at the end of the day, despite a significant number leaving through a limited exit area, students were orderly and left the building sensibly. The level of supervision for those students who take the bus home is high and ensures students' safety, particularly when crossing the main road.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to reduce the high level of fixed term exclusions, particularly for specific groups, notably those students eligible for free school meals, boys and those supported at school action plus.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster, 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

Angela Headon

Her Majesty's Inspector

