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Mr Neil Houchen
Principal
The Eastwood Academy
Rayleigh Road
Leigh-on-Sea
SS9 5UU

Dear Mr Houchen

No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Eastwood Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 18 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 academy.

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 academy.

Evidence

I considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- 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

The Eastwood Academy is a smaller than average size secondary school. The proportion of students for whom the academy is in receipt of the pupil premium is close to the national average. Very few students come from minority ethnic groups, and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special needs supported by school action is below average. The

proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.

The academy's previous inspection in September 2013 judged behaviour to be good, but commented that exclusions were above the national average.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

I found the strengths in behaviour reported at the previous inspection continue to be evident. 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. I visited a wide range of lessons covering different subjects and age groups. I was struck by the remarkable degree of consistency in students' behaviour in the different lessons whether in Year 10 art where students were all engaged in their own drawings and paintings or in Year 8 French where students listened to their teacher and other students with rapt attention. All lessons were characterised by students diligently engaging in learning. Relationships with teachers and with other students were very productive. There was an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students arrived ready to work and the learning was maintained to the end of lessons. For example, in a Year 9 business studies lesson, students were enthusiastically using mini-whiteboards to give the teacher feedback information on their knowledge and understanding. At the end of one lesson they packed away and left the room following well-rehearsed routines. This was immediately followed by the Year 7 business studies class who arrived and quickly settled ready for work and listened to their instructions. Students arrived at lessons punctually.

Year 11 students demonstrated a mature attitude, both around the academy and in lessons where they were very focussed on their forthcoming examinations, for example in a GCSE citizenship lesson where students were working hard on revision. Students listened carefully to their teachers 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.

At break, lunch time and before the start of the academy's day, students get on very well together and there is a strong sense of community. Students mingle and there is appropriate, but low key supervision by staff. The canteen is a well ordered and calm environment. At the start of the day, students were walking to the academy in a very purposeful manner and were smartly dressed in their uniform.

Your curriculum makes a very positive contribution to students' behaviour and safety. Citizenship and religious education (RE) lessons are treated seriously as they lead to a GCSE qualification. These subjects help students understand one another, consider moral issues and play an important role in supporting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and development together with an appreciation of different cultures, democracy and the rule of law. For example, Year 9 RE students were maturely discussing different scenarios concerning abortion.

Since the previous inspection, you have done much to provide additional support for students at risk of exclusion or poor attendance. Students spoke powerfully about how their behaviour has improved or even been transformed thanks to the intervention of teachers and the trust and responsibility given to them. Other students spoke about how the academy's support for them in challenging bullying from outside the academy has led to a more positive attitude towards being at

school. All students spoken to were adamant that the academy was a very safe place to be.

Your approach to behaviour management has resulted, in recent years, in fixed term exclusion rates that are high. The proportions of those excluded from different groups reflect the proportions found nationally but at a higher level. For example twice as many boys as girls receive a fixed term exclusion and around four times as many students entitled to free school meals as other pupils were excluded reflecting the national picture. Your current figures for total fixed term exclusions indicate a substantial reduction, but the figures remain notably above the national average. The impact of such widespread use of the sanction is that some students told me that they see the sanction as 'normal' rather than exceptional and the impact is lost. Students spoke to me about their exclusion being 'a nice day off' and an opportunity to 'go shopping'. Students told me that internal sanctions, such as 'pastoral supervision', were a much more effective sanction. This sanction is used well, enabling students, separated from their peers, to catch up with work and focus particularly on making progress in English and mathematics.

You and the Academy's leaders take a rigorous approach to monitoring punctuality and attendance. As a result, attendance has continued to increase over time. The academy's achievement data also shows a continuing picture of improvement, especially amongst students eligible for support through the pupil premium.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to reduce the above average level of fixed term exclusions, particularly for specific groups, notably boys and those students eligible for free school meals.

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

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector