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9 March 2015

Mrs S Franklin
Headteacher
Kings Ash Academy
Pimm Road
Paignton
Devon
TQ3 3XA

Dear Mrs Franklin

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Kings Ash Academy

Following my visit with Tracy Hannon, additional inspector, to your academy on 6 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.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the quality of behaviour of pupils at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including break and lunchtimes
- documentary evidence
- discussions with academy leaders and staff
- informal discussions with a few parents in the school playground.

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

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

Kings Ash Academy is a large primary school. Currently there are 411 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils come from a White British background. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional government funding) is significantly above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also above the average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils arriving and leaving during the course of their primary education is above average. A new headteacher arrived at the school in September 2014.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The headteacher has worked determinedly and with some success to improve standards of pupils' behaviour, especially outside of the classroom and throughout the school day. With the full support of the governing body she has set high expectations of behaviour that are now being applied and followed up consistently by all staff. All teachers and support staff benefit from an on-going programme of professional development and training in behaviour management. This work is ensuring all adults understand and give a consistent message to pupils about how to behave in lessons and at other times during the school day. Many of the changes to support pupils' good behaviour have only recently been introduced. However, already there is a greater consistency of approach to managing behaviour throughout the school. For example, every class now has a dedicated wall space where 'star pupils' and the current 'class ambassador' are celebrated. The school's behaviour rules in the form of a new 'behaviour ladder' are also displayed in every classroom. This makes clear to all the staff and pupils the progression of rewards for good behaviour as well as the sanctions to deter pupils' inappropriate behaviour. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said the new system was fairer and they particularly liked the way the behaviour ladder rewards them for being well-behaved. Pupils say they now look forward to 'our time' at the end of each Friday afternoon to take part in a range of fun activities. Indeed inspectors saw during this time pupils positively engaged in a wide range of self-selected, skills-based activities such as practical science, craft and computing. Leaders and teachers are encouraged by how well pupils are responding to the new approaches to managing their behaviour. They also acknowledge it is still too early to measure the impact this new approach to behaviour management might have on the long-term behaviour of pupils.

Staff have carefully planned behaviour routines to ensure a calm beginning to the start of the school day. Inspectors saw pupils who arrive early at school waiting sensibly in the playground or joining in activities that are organised and closely supervised by members of staff. Similarly, most pupils leave school sensibly at the end of the school day. However, staff do not supervise pupils thoroughly as they leave the school. As a result, some pupils, noticing the lack of adult supervision, behave inappropriately. For example, a few pupils were observed running and pushing each other as they left the school premises and some pupils climbed on walls.

When meeting adults most pupils are polite and courteous. In nearly all lessons observed during the inspection the vast majority of pupils showed positive attitudes to one another and a willingness to learn. This is because teachers plan lessons that motivate and interest pupils. The large numbers of teaching assistants play an important role in helping to maintain a consistent focus on promoting pupils' positive behaviour. Adults reward pupils' good behaviour with verbal praise or stickers when they notice pupils listening carefully to instructions, waiting patiently or using polite language with one another. The new reward system gives a consistent reminder to pupils about how to behave and helps to promote respect between staff and pupils throughout the school. Teachers enable pupils to discuss ideas and develop an appreciation of one another's points of view. For example, at the start of a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils settled quickly to learning about how to measure angles using a protractor. The class teacher carefully questioned pupils to check on their previous learning and gave them opportunities to measure angles together. The teacher used modern technology very effectively to keep pupils engaged in learning as well as to support her teaching. As a result, all pupils maintained good concentration and made good progress in this lesson. Inspectors noticed a few teachers did not always set and maintain the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour from the start of the lesson. When this happened some low-level disruptive behaviour occurred, such as playing with rulers and chatting while the teacher spoke, which led to some pupils' loss of concentration.

A small minority of pupils continue to challenge the authority of teachers in lessons. Some pupils who do not behave consistently well in lessons attend specialist on-site provision. In this unit all staff are expertly trained to offer therapeutic support to the few pupils with highly complex needs. This work is helping pupils to manage their behaviours and develop more positive attitudes towards learning. Recently teachers have begun to make better use of the school's garden area in order to help pupils manage their behaviour more effectively. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said they enjoyed this activity and were looking forward to planting and growing things.

Inspectors observed the majority of pupils getting on well with one another at break and lunchtime. During the longer lunchtime break adults provided pupils with a good range of games and activities to choose from. Adults engage purposefully in play activities with pupils and respond swiftly when occasionally pupils fall out with one another. Pupils are able to choose from a range of activities such as hockey, bat and ball games or quieter table-top activities. Adults do not offer close enough

supervision in the dining hall or positively engage with pupils to promote good behaviour while they are eating. As a result, some pupils mess about while lining up for their lunch and many do not display good manners while eating.

Pupils spoke candidly with inspectors and said since their new headteacher had arrived 'teachers have changed everything' to improve behaviour. They said 'teachers are always helping us and plan interesting lessons'. Pupils particularly like the new behaviour ladder which they say is easier to understand than the previous behaviour system. Pupils say they often hear other pupils swearing in school and this sometimes includes racist comments. However, pupils were keen to stress the school deals quickly with those pupils when this happens. Pupils also acknowledged to inspectors that sometimes their learning is interrupted by 'naughty behaviour'. They say this is more likely to occur when they are not being taught by their regular teachers. However, pupils also said they feel safe in school and know that their teachers won't let anything happen to them. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the changes to the way their good behaviour is rewarded. One pupil summed up the thoughts of most by saying, 'I like taking part in things I've never done before. I like the after-school clubs like football, computing and art. I would like the school to set up a homework club every day after school.'

Records show the school has not been consistent in the recording of incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the past. Neither has there been a consistent approach to repairing and restoring broken relationships between pupils. However, since January 2015 leaders have introduced a more consistent and robust recording of behaviour management, including managed exclusions. The school works closely with external partners and agencies and now has very clear guidelines to manage and record pupils' absence and behaviour. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are carefully managed and promoted regularly through celebration assemblies and each classroom displays its weekly record of attendance. To encourage regular attendance the school runs a successful breakfast club that is free to pupils. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

Parents who spoke with inspectors say they have appreciated the changes the new headteacher has introduced to improve pupils' behaviour since she came to the school. Parents say they are being kept better informed about how well their children are doing in school. They believe behaviour remains a cause for concern but are confident the school is doing all it can to tackle this. The headteacher has recently introduced a parents' forum in order to strengthen the school's partnership with parents and work more closely with the wider community.

External support

Kings Ash Academy wisely draws on the expertise of external partners and agencies to promote and sustain the good behaviour of pupils. The school is currently working closely with colleagues from a nearby teaching school to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure leaders regularly check the impact of strategies introduced to promote and sustain pupils' good behaviour and use this information to secure the good behaviour of all pupils.
- Provide mealtime assistants with guidance on how to improve pupils' table manners and promote good behaviour when eating lunch.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector