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Mr Kenwyn Paddy
Principal
Leeds East Academy
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Dear Mr Paddy

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Leeds East Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 18 November 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 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour 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 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 improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

Leeds East Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with 656 pupils. The number of pupils on roll is rising, having been just over 600 at the time of the last inspection in January 2015. The academy no longer has a sixth form. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is average. The majority of pupils are White British. An above-average proportion of pupils are from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The academy is fully staffed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour was judged to require improvement at the previous inspection in January 2015. Although leaders still judge behaviour to require improvement, their actions since the last inspection are beginning to improve overall attendance and have reduced the number of days lost when pupils are excluded from the academy. In addition, pupils now take more pride in their work and the quality of their presentation in books has improved. Pupils continue to say they make better progress than in the past because behaviour across the academy is well managed.

The academy's positive discipline system is extremely well understood by staff and pupils. Members of staff apply the policy consistently. Posters in every classroom set out clearly the actions that will be taken if pupils do not uphold the code of conduct. Pupils said, 'Knowing where we stand has helped to improve our behaviour'. All rewards and sanctions issued by members of staff are recorded in pupils' planners, which are regularly checked by staff coaches. Because of this, coaches are well placed to help pupils address the specific aspects of their behaviour that cause concern. Older pupils are unanimous in their view that the introduction of the positive discipline policy marked a transformational point in the academy's development.

During lessons, pupils comply with teachers' expectations and follow instructions quickly. Most pupils engage readily with teachers' questions, although some begin to disengage and become restless if they are inactive for too long. In general, teachers have command of the classroom and, as such, are able to focus on effective teaching and learning. They have raised their expectations concerning the presentation of work and they no longer accept books that are untidy. If there is any misbehaviour, teachers apply sanctions calmly and explain their reasons. In response, most pupils modify their behaviour accordingly. Misdemeanours, such as being late, not having the required equipment or shouting out are routinely challenged by members of staff.

The isolation room, introduced as part of the positive discipline approach, is tightly managed and serves as an effective deterrent. The academy keeps detailed records of the number of referrals to the isolation room and uses the information effectively to target individual support for pupils. The proportion of pupils who were repeatedly referred to the isolation room steadily declined across the last academic year.

Nevertheless, a proportion of pupils continue to present challenging behaviour. In particular, some pupils who join the academy in Year 7 or transfer during the year struggle to adapt to the academy's high expectations. The academy works closely with these pupils to try and prevent them from becoming excluded. For example, the academy provides one-to-one support from specialist behaviour staff and an art therapy programme. In addition, there are well-developed links with social services and the police. However, the number of behaviour incidents leading to exclusion has not reduced. Academy leaders have amended the behaviour policy so that periods of exclusion are now shorter. As a result, the number of days lost as a result of exclusion has reduced. There were two permanent exclusions from the academy in 2014/15. So far this year, there has been none. Leaders have also begun to work more closely with the feeder primary schools in order to develop more common approaches to managing behaviour.

There are now fewer pupils attending alternative provision as the academy increasingly looks to manage more challenging pupils within the mainstream provision. Alternative providers were used more widely in the past, but most pupils failed to attain the qualifications needed to take the next step into further education, employment or training. Currently, only 12 pupils attend alternative provision on a full-time or part-time basis. From January 2016, the White Rose Academy Trust will open its own specialist facility for pupils who struggle to manage in mainstream education. This facility will provide a broad curriculum, with the aim of ensuring that pupils attain appropriate qualifications.

Provisional attendance data for the year 2014/15 indicates that overall attendance was 90.2%, which was well below the national average for secondary schools. Of greatest concern was the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent (those that attend only 85% of the time). In part, this reflected the academy's determination to improve standards of behaviour. Pleasingly, pupils have now begun to come to school more regularly. Attendance for the first half-term of this academic year is up on the same period last year. In particular, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved the most. Provision to support and challenge low attenders is now more robust. The academy has dedicated pastoral and attendance teams that employ a wide range of strategies to improve attendance, including prosecuting the most problematic families. Rewards for good attendance and a competition between different coaching groups have further underpinned recent improvements.

Pupils are well supervised at the start and end of the day and during social times. Pupils mix well with one another in the dining hall and library areas and told me there is rarely any misbehaviour. The academy site is spotlessly clean and tidy with no litter. Pupils say there is little bullying, and when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly by members of staff. During this inspection, an assembly very effectively stressed the damaging impact of bullying, and provided pupils with good advice on how to respond if confronted with bullying. Pupils assert the academy is a safe place to learn. Coaching sessions help pupils to appreciate individual rights and responsibilities and provide valuable opportunities for them to discuss and debate topical issues. For example, pupils are well aware of the risks of radicalisation and

extremist behaviour. Pupils are tolerant of one another and welcome newcomers to the academy, especially those for whom English is an additional language.

Senior leaders are clear in their determination to secure consistently good standards of behaviour and attendance. They recognise that these aspects of academy life must be firmly in place in order for pupils to make good progress and attain better outcomes in examinations. Leaders provide good role models for staff and pupils. They are highly visible around the academy and consistently encourage pupils to uphold high standards of behaviour. As a result, most pupils are courteous and polite.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further improve overall attendance and reduce rates of persistent absenteeism.
- Further strengthen attitudes to learning by ensuring lessons actively engage pupils and develop their skills to work independently.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Director of Children's Services for Leeds and the Chair of the Local Accountability Board.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector