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Mrs Melanie Hooson
Acting head of school
Sundorne School and Sports College
Corndon Crescent
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Dear Mrs Hooson

Short inspection of Sundorne School and Sports College

Following my visit with Peter Humphries, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 26 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2011.

This academy continues to be good.

Since the last inspection, the school has become an academy and joined the Shrewsbury Academies Trust. The academy is currently in the process of merging with The Grange School which is a nearby secondary school. You have recently been appointed as acting head of school. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The previous inspection report praised the school for its vision, determination and outstanding leadership. The report also identified significantly improved levels of attainment for all pupils since the previous inspection and the positive progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These features continue to be of a very high quality.

However, the previous report directed the school to raise standards, especially in English and mathematics. It recommended that teachers sharpen assessment, feedback and planning in order to improve pupils' learning. Since the last inspection, academy leaders have addressed these issues effectively and were able to show us the progress made in these areas. For example, middle leaders are more closely involved in checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Subject

leaders use the information they collect to identify pupils not making the progress expected and provide appropriate support. As a result, rates of progress across a range of subjects including English and mathematics are broadly in line with or above the national average.

Under your leadership, senior leaders work with more rigour and clarity of purpose. Middle leaders have been galvanised and play a greater part in school development. Subject leaders who spoke with inspectors said that they are now held to account more for their performance and for pupils' progress. Trust leaders provide effective support in developing the skills of middle leaders. Academy leaders have similar expectations of other staff. As a result, you and your team are ensuring the academy's mission of 'achieving more together' is realised. The pupils are well turned out and show pride in themselves. This is reflected in the care that so many take with their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements and procedures operate properly and promptly. Training is appropriate, frequent and up to date. For example, all staff have recently had training on how to prevent radicalisation and extremism. As a result, leaders, staff and governors understand what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. Academy records show that when staff have had cause to act, they have done so in a proportionate and timely manner. Academy policies reflect current guidance and requirements. Having said this, a few administrative routines could be organised with greater efficiency so that the most recent versions of guidance documents are more readily available when needed.

Pupils say that they feel safe and have an awareness of issues such as risks from violence and sexual exploitation, and those potentially involving the internet. However, pupils do not have the same levels of awareness that staff do about preventing radicalisation and extremism. Pupils are taught to respect the views of others and about cultures, lifestyles and faiths that are different from their own.

Inspection findings

- Leaders evaluate the academy accurately using information from a variety of sources. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the academy and what needs to improve further in order to become outstanding.
- Governors ask challenging questions of leaders and are persistent in ensuring that leaders provide them with information. As a result, governors have a true view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses.
- In 2015, more than two thirds of pupils completing Key Stage 4 had made at least the progress they should as a result of consistently good teaching in English and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils making more than the progress expected was lower than for all pupils nationally. This was especially so

for disadvantaged pupils. Information you provided about pupils currently in the academy shows that gaps in rates of progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the academy and nationally are continuing to decrease.

- The proportion of pupils achieving at least five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics rose in 2015. However, this was lower than the national average, reflecting the below-average starting points of these pupils when they joined the school in Year 7.
- Leaders and staff have worked together to develop and introduce an effective marking and feedback policy. As a result, pupils are given clear and precise information about how to improve their work. You make sure that the new policy is manageable for staff and helps pupils improve their work. As a consequence, the new marking and feedback policy is being implemented with increasing consistency by the vast majority of staff.
- Good practice in teaching and leadership is shared with other schools in the Shrewsbury Academies Trust. The academy collaborates well with The Grange School to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, including vocational subjects for pupils who attend Sundorne School and Sports College.
- The educational needs of pupils with low starting points are met through the 'mini school'. Pupils in this group receive additional support with literacy and numeracy. Leaders were able to demonstrate the effectiveness of this provision as the number of pupils receiving additional support decreases over time as their literacy and numeracy skills improve.
- Pupils are interested in the diversity of modern Britain. Opportunities to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally have been mapped throughout the curriculum and complemented by assemblies and activities during form time. However, the impact of promoting fundamental British values has not been fully evaluated.
- Attendance is high for most pupils. However, absence rates for disadvantaged pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have previously been high. Effective actions, such as improved engagement with the parents of disadvantaged pupils, have led to a reduction in absence rates among these pupils this year.
- Leaders have systems to collect information on the achievement of pupils in the academy. You are taking steps to improve the quality of these systems because you recognise that in the past some of the information collected has been inaccurate. Current analysis of how well different groups of learners are doing is not always as searching as it could be. Consequently, the academy does not always report on the impact of its work as effectively as it could.
- The proportion of pupils who do not successfully continue in education, training or employment after Year 11 is above the national average. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils. Although leaders are providing additional advice to Year 11 to improve destinations, younger pupils told inspectors that they would like to start this process earlier during their school careers.

Next steps for the academy

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they evaluate all of the academy's work in order to identify successes and weaknesses and to inform future actions
- pupils' awareness of the risks posed by extremist groups or individuals is raised so that they better understand how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation
- the process of careers advice and guidance starts in Year 8 so pupils can make more informed choices about their future.

I am copying this letter to the Executive Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Shrewsbury Academies Trust, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Shropshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met you and other senior leaders, including the designated lead for safeguarding in the academy. I met with the Executive Principal of Shrewsbury Academies Trust and the Chair of the Local Governing Body. Pupils gave inspectors their views on the academy when they spoke to us in lessons and around the academy site at break and lunchtime. We also considered the views of pupils through the 52 responses to the online questionnaire. We joined you and the senior leader with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment in short visits to lessons where we spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their work in books and during practical activities. We spoke to academy staff and also took their views into account through the 60 responses to the online questionnaire. The views of parents were considered through the 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors evaluated recent information on pupils' progress and scrutinised other records about keeping pupils safe, their attendance and punctuality and their behaviour.