

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



11 January 2017

Mrs Amanda Chong
Ribston Hall High School
Stroud Road
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 5LE

Dear Mrs Chong

Short inspection of Ribston Hall High School

Following my visit to the school on 14 December 2016 with Andrew Lovett, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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 the school was judged to be good in June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have kept the school on track through a major staff restructuring programme which has streamlined both the leadership team and the team of curriculum leaders. This has made monitoring and accountability more effective.

The leaders of English and mathematics are part of the extended leadership team as they provide effective, extra capacity to implement the government's new curriculum and assessments. They are supporting staff in their curriculum areas well and monitoring progress rigorously.

The assistant headteacher in charge of performance information has made sure that pupils' targets are aspirational and based on each individual pupil's ability. You and the majority of curriculum leaders are checking progress conscientiously and have put well-considered measures in place to support pupils who are failing to keep up with their work.

You and other leaders have made sure that teaching is engaging and stimulating by providing high-quality and essential professional development within school. Also, as suggested at the last inspection, teachers meet locally, now, with colleagues from other schools to share ideas. This has enhanced activities and improved pupils' learning.

You have put a feedback policy in place which is helping the majority of pupils to know how to develop their learning and progress. There is room for further improvement and consistency in this area of work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are of a high quality and detailed. Staff are trained well on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. You have created a well-being team that meets weekly to make sure that the increasing number of pupils with complex needs are safe and secure in school. The team works determinedly, yet sensitively, with pupils, parents and external agencies to monitor and support the most vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are secure, now, and part of the school's culture.

Inspection findings

- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the last inspection. She ensures that school leaders are held to account and meets regularly with you to check that improvement plans are on track. This heightened accountability is focusing more closely on the development of all pupils including those who are the most able.
- Governors meet with curriculum leaders and monitor the progress in subjects. This strategic input is raising standards and supporting pupils to make better progress.
- The most effective teachers are modelling good practice to others in posing questions which deepen pupils' thinking and understanding so that a high standard of achievement is sustained.
- Pupils' expectations of what it is possible for them to achieve have been raised. Much of this successful work has been done by the assistant headteacher appointed in September. He is passionate about improving the self-esteem and confidence of pupils so that their self-belief generates better outcomes. This work is at an embryonic stage.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. A greater emphasis is placed on ambitious future education, employment and training in the light of the high ability of the vast majority of students attending this grammar school sixth form. Careers guidance supports students well.
- More students are attending the sixth form from other establishments because of its good reputation. The chair of the governing body is correctly challenging the culture of the sixth form; clear plans are in place for a more diverse curriculum which will better suit all students' needs.
- Students who joined the school from elsewhere to attend the sixth form commented on the tolerant and inclusive nature of the school. Existing students helped them to make a seamless transition and begin their studies positively.
- A new coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities was appointed in May which has led to more effective arrangements for pupils entitled to

government funding to support their needs. The focus and support plans for these pupils are apposite and their attendance and achievement is improving as a result.

- It is a similar picture for disadvantaged pupils as the same leader oversees their needs. Previously, there was a focus on the pupils' well-being. Necessary as this is, this aspect has been combined, now, with removing any barriers to pupils' learning more efficiently. Consequently, achievement is at the right, often high, standard for these pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. Pupil premium funds are spent effectively.
- The very complex needs of a few pupils are understood well. The school has worked sensitively and productively with a range of external agencies to ensure that the very best outcomes can be achieved, despite some of these pupils' medical needs making it hard for them to attend regularly.
- Pupils read well and enjoy the opportunities they are given to do this. They are confident in their understanding of texts and eloquent in their explanations of them.
- There are processes in place for curriculum leaders to be accountable for the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. Leaders of the core subjects, performance arts (music, dance and drama), physical education and technology are holding teachers to account successfully so progress is more rapid. Practice is not as strong in other subject areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all curriculum leaders monitor their departments rigorously to bring about further improvements in the quality of teaching and standards of achievement
- pupils understand consistently what they need to do to improve their learning so that they achieve the highest levels of which they are capable.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key lines of enquiry were:

- What are school leaders doing to ensure that the quality of teaching is improving outcomes in subjects across the curriculum for groups of pupils in Years 7 to 11?
- What are school leaders doing to ensure that the quality of teaching is improving A-level outcomes for students in the sixth form?
- What are leaders and governors doing to ensure that pupil premium funding and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping to improve outcomes and attendance for these pupils?
- How are leaders and governors ensuring that arrangements for safeguarding are secure and pervade the culture of the school?

During the inspection, Andrew Lovett, Her Majesty's Inspector, and I met with you, leaders, governors, staff and pupils. We visited lessons to observe learning, looked at the quality of the work in pupils' exercise books and listened to pupils in Years 9 and 10 read. We considered documentary evidence related to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding, attendance and the use of the pupil premium funding. We took into account 121 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 119 comments written by parents and responses to questionnaires completed by 221 pupils and 64 members of staff.