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Mr Steve Shaw
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Dear Mr Shaw

Short inspection of Boroughbridge High School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016 with David Pridding, Ofsted 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 February 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 acted at pace to deal with weaknesses when they have arisen following the previous inspection, to maintain a good level of education for pupils. Your determination that pupils will achieve all of which they are capable is reflected in your day-to-day work. Governors provide highly effective challenge, which supports you to analyse and evaluate plans and actions taken effectively.

Since your appointment in April 2015, you have overhauled systems such as quality assurance, performance management, attendance procedures, data systems and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, you, and the governing body, are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. You introduced your 'stage not age' curriculum, which ensures that the most able pupils can make more rapid progress. You have also entered into a collaborative sixth-form arrangement to broaden the range of post-16 subjects on offer. These actions mean that pupils have a curriculum which is bespoke, teaching is improving, attendance is improving and pupils are making better progress.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve the consistency of progress made by pupils and to increase the proportion of good and better teaching. Teaching has improved and continues to improve with the good-quality professional development opportunities in the school, and by using expertise from

the Yorkshire Teaching Schools Alliance. In school, for example, leaders have created a pioneer group of good and outstanding teachers to share good practice and coach other teachers. Better teaching is leading to better progress for pupils, as seen in recent examination results, in school tracking information and in pupils' work.

You know the areas where you can improve, for example in ensuring that pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least the same progress as others from the same starting points. You are implementing robust and rigorous plans to ensure that this is the case and these improvements are already evident, for example in pupils' work and school tracking data.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding is a high priority for all staff. Regular staff training and updates take place so that staff are very well prepared to deal with any issues that arise. Staff are highly aware of the warning signs to look out for and are confident in how they would deal with any disclosures made to them.

The open culture in the school ensures that pupils know who to go to if there is a problem. Pupils told us that they could approach any teacher and they would help. Systems and procedures for any necessary referrals to the local authority are in place; school leaders follow up rigorously if referrals occur. Accurate and thorough records are in place. Pupils are safe in your school. Staff, parents and pupils themselves confirm this view. School leaders have ensured that sixth-form pupils travelling to other sites are safe and risk assessments are in place.

Inspection findings

- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than they did in 2015. Through careful spending of additional funds, for example on literacy and numeracy support and strategies to improve attendance, most disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in the last academic year. In books, there is little difference in progress made by disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers. In some subjects, such as English, some disadvantaged pupils are outperforming their peers.
- Middle leaders are taking steps to improve areas of underperformance. They have developed and are implementing robust action plans to tackle areas of weakness. For example, in 2015 in science, pupils did not perform as well in additional science as they did in core science. The new leader has taken steps to modify teaching and implement strategies to excite and enthuse pupils. In English, where outcomes in English literature were not as strong as English language, the leader has redesigned the curriculum to take a more thematic approach, so that pupils develop skills equally in all aspects of English. Current school tracking and work in books indicates that pupils are making strong progress in English and science.
- You and the governors have ensured that there are clear lines of accountability

throughout the school. Through these, leaders are holding staff to account for the progress all pupils make. This is part of the new performance management system, which aligns individual targets to whole-school priorities to ensure that pupils' progress continues to improve.

- Pupils take pride in their work. Presentation in almost all books is good and pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. Pupils are confident, self-assured, and willing to volunteer answers in lessons and support each other to do well. This creates a collaborative atmosphere for learning. A real strength of your school is the relationships your pupils have with your staff. Pupils feel well cared for and supported. They know that their teachers are aspirational for them and this is motivating them to work hard.
- New senior leaders appointed by you have overhauled systems for attendance, which has led to an improvement in attendance across the school. Since September 2016, a new system for tracking attendance is in place, which is allowing leaders to tackle groups and individuals immediately when their attendance begins to decline. Regular meetings with pastoral leaders ensure that leaders take swift action to improve attendance for each individual identified. As a result, whole-school attendance has risen and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is continuing to improve.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to all aspects of their learning and, because of this, incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Where some groups have had higher levels of fixed-term exclusions in the last academic year than their peers, pastoral staff are working with these pupils to improve their behaviour. The number of behaviour incidents from this group has reduced since the beginning of September 2016. However, pupils feel that some teachers do not use the system consistently and that the system is not supporting a small number of pupils to change their behaviour. Pupils also say that the rewards system does not ensure that enough pupils are rewarded for good behaviour.
- The programme of study in the sixth form goes beyond compliance with government guidance. Learners take opportunities to be involved in the wider life of the school, for example they run a variety of clubs for younger pupils to be involved in. An example is the school 'a cappella' group that attracts pupils from across different year groups.
- Since the school entered into a collaborative sixth form with Easingwold and Thirsk schools, the range of qualifications available has increased. Guidance for selecting post-16 choices is now rigorous and ensures that learners select qualifications that prepare them for the next stage in their education or employment. Due to this, retention rates are vastly improving. Leaders have begun to develop systems for quality assuring this new provision. It is too soon to see the impact of these systems on learners' progress and outcomes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders continue to develop monitoring and quality assurance in the new sixth-form collaboration to ensure that new processes are embedded and continue to improve learners' progress
- further developments and refinements to the behaviour system are carried out, so that it is used consistently by all staff and pupils see it is a fair system
- the school rewards system is developed so that it has the same status as the behaviour policy and is valued by all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Debbie Redshaw
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your senior and middle leaders, governors, pupils and a range of staff. We also met with pupils informally. We gathered a range of evidence from conducting learning walks jointly with you and your deputy headteacher and from independent visits to classrooms. Inspectors carried out a book scrutiny to look at the depth of learning and pupils' progress over time. The inspection team scrutinised and evaluated documents, including your school self-evaluation, action planning, minutes from meetings of the governing body, performance management information, safeguarding records and documents showing the monitoring of teaching and learning. Account was taken of the 66 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 33 responses to pupil questionnaires and 36 responses to staff questionnaires.

The key lines of enquiry for this inspection were as follows:

- Are leaders doing enough to improve the progress and outcomes for pupils who are disadvantaged? What has been the impact of their actions?
- Is the quality of teaching and learning improving in the school? Is this having an impact on progress for all pupils and is the school addressing areas of underperformance for subject areas and key groups of pupils?
- Have leaders and managers improved attendance and is behaviour still good?
- Is the sixth form good? Is it compliant with the government requirements for the

post-16 programme of study? Have retention rates improved and are pupils receiving the right support and guidance in selecting courses?

- Is safeguarding effective?