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Mrs Jean Hopegood  
Headteacher  
Selwood Academy  
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Somerset  
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Dear Mrs Hopegood

### **Short inspection of Selwood Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 24 May 2017 with Jacqui Goodall, 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 January 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Staff are aware of your high expectations. You have introduced effective systems for challenging underperformance of staff and pupils and have been active in holding senior and middle leaders to account. You have worked with the headteachers of other schools in developing assessment procedures and transition arrangements.

Governance at the school is a strength. Governors take a precise and strategic approach to their roles. They have worked with you to develop a very clear strategy on what the school needs to do in order to support the staff and ensure that pupils make the progress they should.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Teachers are skilled at setting targets which challenge pupils and have a clear focus on learning over time. Literacy is now a strength across the curriculum. In addition, pupils enjoy their lessons, especially in science.

Pupils at the school are extremely polite and accommodating. This was epitomised by the comment of a staff member, who said, 'It is a pleasure to work with such well-mannered, respectful, appreciative and delightful children. I come into school every day looking forward to working with them. I really feel the Christian ethos at this school gives the children an excellent base for their future lives.'

Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and spoke about their enjoyment of reading in particular. They focus well in class and are respectful of others' views and responses. There is a real sense of fun at the school but also an increased understanding of the need to work hard. Pupils challenge themselves in all aspects of their learning.

The range of opportunities provided by the school enhances the quality of pupils' education. For example, pupils were recently recognised for their work on a cross-curricular project, working with professional musicians and artists and using drama, arts and history. This project involved 300 pupils. The school was one of six schools nationally recognised for this work. Pupils also work closely with the Bath International Music Festival, providing the opening performance. Pupils speak excitedly about their experiences and the opportunities that they are given.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The culture of the school is one where every member of staff and every volunteer is aware of their responsibilities and receives regular training and support. Designated leaders for safeguarding are thorough in engaging with external agencies and ensuring that any concerns are followed through. Pupils state that they feel safe and supported at the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Documentation demonstrates that staff in the school carry out thorough checks to ensure that the school is a safe place to be. Responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and parents were positive in stating that pupils are safe and well cared for in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry focused on the capacity of school leaders and governors to bring about and sustain improvement across the school. You, your senior and middle leaders and governors, provide strong leadership. The systems you have introduced are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. You have introduced a rigorous system for tracking and monitoring which ensures that staff focus on the importance of the progress of each pupil. Training for all staff has been at the forefront of your leadership since your appointment, with middle and senior leaders growing in strength as a result of the training they receive. Middle leaders are now readily accountable for pupils' achievement and your system of reviews of their leadership has been instrumental in their rapid development. They have a clear understanding of their role and how to develop teachers within their teams as well as how to maintain a greater focus upon progress. This has led to increased progress for pupils in key stage 2.
- Staff appreciate the additional training they have received and the responsibilities they have been given. As one enthusiastically stated, 'Staff are actively encouraged to broaden their horizons and are supported appropriately.' As another stated, 'The headteacher has made changes which challenge our practice in a supportive yet rigorous manner.' Inspectors saw the impact of this strategy when scrutinising pupils' work and in meetings with staff. Staff have high expectations of pupils and use assessment well to help them to progress.
- Governors also play an important role in the leadership of the school. They regularly

visit the school to meet with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They take an active role where possible, such as in supporting in reading and enrichment activities. Through their detailed understanding of the school, they can precisely identify the steps that leaders need to take to continue to improve. Consequently, governors are well equipped to hold leaders to account, asking searching and challenging questions and supporting in equal measure.

- My second line of enquiry focused on the progress of pupils at key stage 2. In 2016, pupils did not meet the floor target for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books and your own assessment information show that rapid progress was made by these pupils from their starting points when they joined the school at the start of Year 5 through to taking external tests in Year 6. Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress. Because of your higher expectations of teachers, the level of challenge for pupils has risen. You and your leaders have introduced clear schemes of learning linked to assessment criteria, which are based on what pupils know, understand and can do. In recent years, too many pupils have not made the progress in mathematics of which they are capable. You have challenged poor teaching in mathematics and recognise that there is more to do here so that pupils maximise their ability. Similarly, you have insisted that teachers focus more precisely on developing the quality of pupils' writing and reading. Internal assessment information and inspectors' findings show that the different groups of pupils are making better progress and that standards in key stage 2 are rising.
- I also examined the progress and attainment of pupils currently in the school. Good work is done with other schools to ensure that teachers are clear about what is expected of pupils as soon as they join the school. For example, your work with local first schools is helping staff to better understand the experience of pupils when they first arrive in Year 5. The introduction of a consistent baseline assessment means that teachers are better informed about the abilities of pupils and are able to pick out and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This work and the rigorous focus on assessment that has been introduced over the last two years ensures that staff know the potential that pupils have and so are able to better match learning to their needs. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6, especially in reading and writing, and also in Years 7 and 8, especially in history, geography and science. By the time they leave Selwood at the end of Year 8 pupils are ready for the next stage in their education.
- Next, we examined the actions taken by leaders in improving attendance. Attendance figures up to the date of the inspection indicate that attendance for all groups of pupils is much improved compared to last year and is currently above 95%. You and your senior leaders have worked hard to emphasise the importance of good attendance with parents. The work you do with external agencies has also helped to improve attendance at the school.
- My final line of enquiry focused upon the high number of fixed-term exclusions at the school in the previous academic year, the provision for such pupils and the reasons for the exclusions. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils in the school are able to attend school in a safe and secure environment. At times, pupils and parents do not respond in the way they should and the school has been firm in dealing with this. Pupils with specific issues are catered for on-site and have access to specialist teachers. The fact that there are no permanent exclusions is testament to the work

that staff do to ensure that they keep pupils in school. When pupils misbehave, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Senior leaders and staff at the school work closely with external agencies to ensure that those pupils who occasionally do not attend school because of poor behaviour continue their education.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use assessment information consistently to inform their planning in order that pupils make more rapid progress in mathematics
- staff fully embed strategies recently introduced by the leadership team to maximise the performance of staff and pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Shanks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, your deputy joined the inspection team in observing learning in classrooms. The inspection team looked at a large number of pupils' books covering a wide range of subjects and years. We heard pupils of differing abilities and from each year group read.

We held meetings with senior and middle leaders and four governors. The team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, safeguarding audit, surveys of parents, safeguarding and child protection records, external reports about the school and the school's assessment information.

The inspection team spoke with pupils in classes as well as at lunchtime to learn about their experience of school, and considered the responses of 49 pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took into account the views of 40 parents who responded to Parent View and of 40 teaching and support staff. I also received one letter from a parent.