

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



29 September 2017

Miss Jennifer Templar  
Headteacher  
Whitcliffe Mount School  
Turnsteeds Avenue  
Cleckheaton  
West Yorkshire  
BD19 3AQ

Dear Miss Templar

### **Short inspection of Whitcliffe Mount School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 2017 with David Penny, HMI, 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 December 2013.

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

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

The school has been through considerable change since the last inspection. Your leadership team includes three new assistant headteachers. There are 13 new teachers who started in September 2017. At the time of this inspection you had been working in the new school building for only two weeks. You, the governors and the middle leaders believe that the change is empowering and that leadership is strong and effective. Governors are particularly positive about your leadership and the potential for further improvement in the school.

The governing body is highly experienced, determined and ambitious. Governors have appropriate education and business backgrounds, which have supported the design and implementation of the new building. Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate high levels of astute challenge to senior and middle leaders. Governors have drilled down into key areas for improvement in the school, such as science, attendance and the outcomes of the most able. As a result, leaders, including governors, have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. You have taken action to respond to those aspects which require improvement, including responding to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report.

Following the previous inspection you were asked to review the curriculum to

ensure that it meets the needs of pupils in an 11 to 16 years school. You have thought carefully about the curriculum. Pupils enjoy opportunities to study, for example, performing arts, art, music and engineering. Middle leaders value the opportunities to drive curriculum change. You recognised that some areas of the curriculum were not leading to good enough pupils' outcomes. For example, attainment and progress in languages were below the national average in 2016. As a result, you organised an external review of teaching, learning and assessment in languages. Consequently, the quality of teaching has improved, with teachers focusing on speaking the target language. This was observed during the inspection. Attainment in French has risen in 2017; however, attainment in Spanish is still low.

You also took swift action to deal with difficulties in assessments in science last year, which led to insecurity about the predictions of pupils' outcomes. As a result, you have encouraged an ambitious programme of change in science. The new acting director of learning for science has overhauled the curriculum and the assessment system in science. It is too soon to see the impact of this work. Following results in 2016 and 2017, you have also reviewed the curriculum offer for religious studies, which will now be an option at GCSE. As a result of the leaders' and governors' review of independent advice and guidance, you have included careers teaching in the curriculum from Year 7. This is part of your drive to raise the aspirations of pupils.

You were also asked at the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils are stretched and challenged. You have worked hard to raise the aspirations of the most able pupils. For example, key stage 4 pupils have visited Oxford University, and younger pupils are part of the 'brilliant club' in which they work with a PhD tutor on a project and produce a research paper. Pupils undertake the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As a result, the most able pupils can see opportunities for education and careers beyond their local community.

Staff understand the need to challenge the most able pupils in lessons. In top sets visited during the inspection, the most able pupils were engaged in learning which was challenging for the vast majority. Improvements could be seen during the inspection in English, mathematics and science. For example, in a Year 11 chemistry lesson, pupils were learning about Le Chatelier's principle. Pupils were highly engaged in sharing their knowledge and understanding. The teacher and pupils were enthusiastically challenging pupils' misconceptions to ensure that everyone was well prepared for GCSE questions. Following our joint lesson observations, you agreed with me that teachers could provide even more stretching activities to meet the needs of the most able pupils in each class. Leaders and governors recognise that attainment and progress of the most able boys are still areas for improvement, particularly in triple science and mathematics.

You have strengthened your work on attendance. Overall attendance has been at least in line with the national average for the last three years. Pupils who are not disadvantaged have low levels of absence. The absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that

of others in the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff say that there is strong teamwork at the school and pupils are part of the team. The governors' well-being committee carefully monitors the well-being of staff and pupils. Consequently, there is a sense that everyone is working for the best outcomes for pupils, while also providing for their well-being. Staff recognise the impact of school leaders on trying to reduce workload to improve their well-being.

Staff receive annual training from the designated safeguarding lead and all have had training to spot signs of child sexual exploitation and online child protection training. The designated safeguarding lead is not complacent and acts quickly if gaps in staff knowledge are identified. For example, additional training has been provided about female genital mutilation awareness and training about the dark web is planned. The designated safeguarding lead has ensured that she has contact with a senior person from the local authority. Consequently, timely action is taken when pupils are referred to social services.

You acknowledge that a small number of parents and pupils are concerned about bullying. The designated safeguarding lead has undertaken an online review to self-evaluate the school's response to bullying, and key actions have been identified. It is too soon to see the impact of this work. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, say that their child is safe at school, and this is supported by what pupils and staff say. A typical comment from parents is that children feel looked after, happy and safe. Parents are particularly complimentary about the transition for pupils who have recently started Year 7.

The checks made on new staff are rigorous. The single central record complies with requirements, and is well managed and efficiently used. Appropriate recruitment procedures are in place.

### **Inspection findings**

- There is a clear and effective cycle for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The quality assurance includes lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils about their learning. Your online records readily identify those teachers who need support or challenge to improve their practice. Middle leaders described how they had helped members of their faculty to improve their practice, thus improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Additional challenge is provided through support plans. As a result of this challenge, some teachers have improved their practice, others have left the school. Your high expectations for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are understood.
- Staff value opportunities to work together with colleagues from different subject areas on research projects based on the key school priorities: student engagement, feedback and questioning, and raising aspirations. The outcomes of

the research projects are presented and good practice is shared. Working together in this way has strengthened relationships between staff and developed a confident approach to trying new teaching ideas. Staff also have opportunities to attend external courses to build their practice. For example, all mathematics teachers have been trained in 'mastery' in mathematics. As a result, the teaching of problem-solving has improved in mathematics.

- You have improved the way in which pupil premium funding is spent specifically on the cohort of disadvantaged pupils. The analysis of the impact of pupil premium funding is sophisticated and carefully monitored by the governing body. In 2016, the majority of disadvantaged pupils made good progress. Case studies demonstrate the significant impact of work to address individuals' needs through appropriate support for pupils' mental health, suitable alternative provision and additional teaching. Such support has resulted in outstanding progress for some. You and governors recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils make good progress across their subjects.
- You describe the work of the recently appointed coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as transformational. She has restructured the organisation of teaching assistants who are either faculty-based or working particularly with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Faculty teaching assistants are often subject specialists and are able to respond rapidly to pupils who need extra help to catch up. The coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities provides staff with a handbook which identifies all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with information about their specific needs. Staff are therefore clear about appropriate ways to support these pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities say that they feel very safe and well supported.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching leads to consistently good progress in all subjects, particularly for the most able boys and the disadvantaged
- they continue the drive to improve attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**  
**Information about the inspection**

My colleague and I met with you, other senior leaders, a representative of the local authority and a group of governors. We also held meetings with pupils. We made short visits to lessons with you and other senior leaders, during which we looked at work in pupils' books and talked to them about their learning. We took into account the views of 62 parents, using the online survey 'Parent View', and the responses of 95 members of staff and 17 pupils to their questionnaires. We evaluated a range of documents provided by the school, including information about pupils' progress, safeguarding information and school improvement plans.