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Mrs Joanne Myhill-Johnson
Principal
King Edward VI Academy
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Dear Mrs Myhill-Johnson

Short inspection of King Edward VI Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 2017 with Gary Nixon, 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are proud of King Edward VI Academy and determined that all pupils achieve as they should. The school motto, 'We always try our personal best and accept no excuses', is an important philosophy for leaders, teachers and for pupils. The whole-school community is striving to make sure pupils achieve and are prepared well for the next stage in their education, employment or training.

Since the previous inspection there has been a great deal of change. You have worked tirelessly to address the weaknesses in the school that resulted in the unexpectedly poor key stage 4 outcomes in 2014. You have been successful. There is evidence of accelerated improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is now much improved. Many more pupils are achieving as their starting points would indicate. Pupils said they are extremely proud of their school and grateful to their teachers for 'all they do for us'.

Many parents who commented on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they were pleased their child attended the school, they were achieving well, receiving good support from their teachers and enjoyed a wealth of activities outside the classroom, including involvement in local community events. There were some parents, however, who expressed concern about aspects of the school's provision. You are aware that you need to improve further the communication with parents, inform them of the many great things taking place and engage them more

in the life of the school.

It is a pleasure to walk around the school. Pupils are polite and extremely smart in their uniform. There is a great deal of friendly and positive talk between teachers and pupils. Corridors and classrooms are calm and there is an orderly and productive learning environment. Pupils are known well by all staff. An enormous amount happens to make sure pupils are cared for and they feel safe in their school. You are rightly proud of your pupils and your staff.

Since the previous inspection, decisive action has been taken to improve the school. There were changes to the senior leadership team, including at principal level. The local governing body was removed. An academy improvement board was put in place. You told me this group of expert governors had been influential in helping the school to improve. This governance helped to accelerate the rate of improvement. The good capacity of leaders is now recognised. The academy improvement board will soon be replaced by local governance arrangements. You are excited at this prospect and see this as a further opportunity to involve parents in the life of the school.

Inspectors at the time of the previous inspection identified the need for teachers to have the 'highest expectations for the standards of work pupils can produce' and that they are 'pushed to achieve their very best'. Evidence in pupils' books and in lessons indicate that teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond positively. Pupils, particularly most of the disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress. More pupils are achieving the highest grades at GCSE, including in English and mathematics. Inspectors saw pupils' interests and talents stretched to the limit, particularly in a top-set English lesson.

Your most recent information about pupils' progress shows that they achieve similarly to pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is better than others within the school. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making good progress from their starting points. You are aware that attainment in some subjects is not yet good enough. This is particularly, but not exclusively, the case within science. You are very aware of the urgency needed to address this and rigorous plans are in place and are being implemented.

Pupils' attendance remains a high priority for all leaders and all staff. Concerted efforts are made to ensure that pupils come to school more regularly. There are signs of improvement, but some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders continue to take creative approaches to this issue. You are clear that this challenge, similar to others faced, will be addressed.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Pupils, particularly the most vulnerable pupils, receive some remarkable guidance. Highly skilled staff are sensitive in their approach to the care and support for pupils. Walking around the

school, this care and support is palpable. Pupils know they have people with whom they can speak. They have many staff to turn to if they have problems. Links with outside agencies are good and if any pupil needs specialist help, this help is found promptly.

Pupils said they felt safe in school and if bullying happened it would be quickly and effectively dealt with by their teachers. There is a range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe from harm, including when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- Leaders know the school well and have the capacity to continue to improve it further. They are constantly refining their skills in monitoring pupils' progress and in analysing the difference their work is making to pupils' learning, behaviour and attendance.
- The behaviour for learning policy is working. There has been a substantial reduction in the proportion of pupils excluded from school. No pupils were permanently excluded in 2016/17.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average, but is improving as a result of your effective actions.
- The pupil premium strategy does not yet fully address the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. As a group, these pupils still do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- Pupils, including most of the disadvantaged pupils, make good progress in many of the subjects they study. Pupils in key stage 3 make especially good progress from their starting points. At the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was particularly good in 2016. However, attainment at the end of key stage 4, in some subjects, including science, is not yet good enough.
- There is more to be done to improve communication with parents and to inform them of the good work taking place. It is particularly important to celebrate with them the good conduct of very many pupils and the excellent guidance, support and care they receive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue their work to improve pupils' attainment, particularly within science
- build on the already effective work to improve pupils' attendance, ensuring that, overall, pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attend as well as others do nationally
- improve further the communication with parents and the local community, particularly in relation to the improvements seen in pupils' behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the senior leadership team, a governor, the business manager and a designated safeguarding lead. I spoke with the chair of the academy improvement board by telephone. The team inspector met the leader for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the leader supporting pupils' good behaviour. He also spoke with senior leaders about teaching, learning, assessment and the school's curriculum. Inspectors visited a range of lessons. Some observations of teaching were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. We also observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktime and lunchtime, and during lessons. Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils. Inspectors considered the views of 39 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 15 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 62 responses to the online pupils' questionnaire. In addition, we considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, pupils' performance information, safeguarding records and policies. The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. This was discussed during the inspection. Plans are in place for the trust to address this.

You and I discussed the sixth-form provision. The sixth form is located on the school site. The majority of students attending are from King Edward VI Academy but are officially registered as students from one of the other academies within the trust. The sixth form was, therefore, not included in this inspection.