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9 October 2017

Mr Daniel Hartley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Hartley

### **Short inspection of Minehead Middle School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2017 with Carol Hannaford, 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 March 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 and your senior leaders have high expectations of staff. They support you in your work well because they understand that you want the best for all pupils. Since taking up your appointment, you have worked tirelessly to develop the school's effectiveness. Being part of the West Somerset Academy Trust has increased and enhanced the educational opportunities for pupils. You have collaborated and shared expertise with staff from other schools. Leaders are supported by highly committed governors.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors are happy. They cooperate extremely well with teachers and each other. Leaders and staff have nurtured a welcoming, tolerant and respectful school culture. Pupils feel valued as individuals. Pupils are industrious and engaged in their work. They are courteous and polite.

You have prioritised improving pupils' progress in mathematics and French since the previous inspection. In addition, you have improved the assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills. This information identifies any shortcomings. Support is targeted carefully so that barriers to progress are removed. The success of this work is apparent in the rapid development of pupils' skills in mathematics.

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have ensured a strong culture of keeping pupils safe.

Adults are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views. Notices remind staff of the responsibilities adults have in safeguarding pupils. Record-keeping is thorough and secure.

There are effective systems in place to protect vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding leaders from different schools in the trust work together with families. Timely referrals are made to agencies.

Pupils report that they feel safe. They are prepared well to face risks in the modern world. Pupils feel confident to seek help from adults; they know who to speak to.

The majority of parents agreed that their child is happy at school. They praised the caring work of teachers and other adults.

### **Inspection findings**

- We considered the effectiveness of leaders' actions to strengthen the progress of pupils in mathematics. You have invested in training to improve teachers' mathematical knowledge and skills. Staff have worked effectively with teachers from successful schools, which has boosted their confidence. New schemes of learning have been introduced. Attention to the order in which topics are taught informs schemes of learning. Pupils acquire knowledge securely and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. Teachers have high expectations. Strong relationships exist between teachers and pupils. The most able pupils are working with local universities and pupils' aspirations are higher as a result.
- There is a new leader of writing skills. Revised programmes of work and closer monitoring are helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Teachers are more proficient at developing pupils' writing. Most teachers are tenacious in encouraging pupils to produce the very best pieces of work. Evidence in pupils' English books demonstrates this. Pupils are applying their writing skills in French successfully. Written work in humanities and science is not as strong. You know that this is an area for improvement.
- You have evaluated writing outcomes in the end of year test at key stage 2 in 2017. There were shortfalls in pupils' spelling skills. Teachers have modified the work and, as a result, pupils are now achieving well in spelling.
- Finally, we looked at the school's work to improve attendance. Attendance has declined in comparison to the national average. Trust leaders work with families who have children attending different schools across the trust. Also, they are involving external agencies in supporting the families. This has halted the decline in attendance rates. Leaders are aware that there is still a minority of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not attend as regularly as others.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, improves to at least the national average
- pupils are given more opportunities to develop their writing skills in humanities and science.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Cox  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, inspectors spoke to you, the chief executive of the West Somerset Academy Trust, and other senior teachers, including those with responsibility for safeguarding. I had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors. We visited lessons in mathematics and considered pupils' writing. We looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. Inspectors talked informally to pupils across the site and formally with pupils from every year group. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding and attendance. I scrutinised the school's evaluation documents and the improvement plan. We took into account 38 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, and the comments written by parents.