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Mr Phil Hanson  
Persnore High School  
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Dear Mr Hanson

### **Short inspection of Persnore High School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 2017 with Alison Naylor, 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 July 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leadership team and the governing body share a strong determination to continuously improve the quality of education at Persnore High School. You know the school well, having served as a deputy headteacher before your recent appointment as headteacher. You benefit from the support of a highly effective and committed governing body. You and your staff are determined that all pupils, regardless of their circumstances, are provided with the quality of teaching and support they need to succeed.

In 2016 and 2017 Year 13 students made progress broadly in line with national averages. While, in 2017, most pupils who took examinations in Year 11 made good progress in their GCSEs, some groups of pupils made less progress than they were capable of. You and your team have taken swift and successful action to address the issues that affected the progress of these groups of pupils.

You ensure that the curriculum is broad, rich, and meets the needs of pupils. For example, you have reviewed the curriculum so that pupils who are studying for vocational qualifications can also study for suitable academic GCSEs.

You have developed the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that effective practice is consistent across subject areas. Leaders carry out checks on the quality of teaching and give precise feedback to teachers on how to improve. In addition to this you have introduced more effective coordination of intervention strategies for pupils who require

additional support so that teachers and support staff work more closely together.

The clear strategies you have put in place with the leadership team to improve teaching and support for pupils are having a positive impact on current pupils' progress across the curriculum. From the start of this academic year, the school has become part of a multi-academy trust with the three first schools that are its main feeder schools. You are working closely with the governors and trustees of the multi-academy trust to make sure that this new structure enhances the experience of pupils, raises standards and strengthens links with the community.

Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and discussions held during the inspection show that pupils, parents and staff have an overwhelmingly positive opinion of the school. Pupils talk about the support they get from teachers as one of the main reasons why they enjoy school. Pupils of all ages get involved in the popular lunchtime and after-school clubs which offer activities such as music, drama, chess, debating and a wide range of sports. Students in the sixth form are actively encouraged to play a role in the school community as leaders and mentors. They welcome the opportunities provided to them and are keen to take responsibility for their own learning. Parents value the quality of education that the school provides. For example, one commented that 'communication is excellent' while another said that 'staff are approachable'. Another commented that 'pupils benefit from a huge range of experiences and opportunities'. The work of the resource base for autistic pupils is also praised by parents. The vast majority of staff are positive about the leadership of the school and feel well supported in their work. In the staff survey, conducted as part of the inspection, the vast majority of staff agreed that they enjoy working at the school.

The previous inspection report highlighted the following area for improvement:

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, so that all students make rapid progress, by making sure that:
  - all teachers carefully check students' understanding during lessons so that they are moved on to new tasks at the right time
  - students are given enough opportunities to discuss their learning during lessons.

Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that you are successfully addressing the area for improvement from the previous inspection report. Your records show that the proportion of teaching that results in pupils making rapid progress is increasing over time. During lessons we observed evidence of teachers checking pupils' understanding which enabled them to identify any misconceptions.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders and governors ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. They have a reflective approach to keeping pupils safe and regularly review practices in order to make them more

effective. As a result, leaders and staff are alert to potential risks and know how to respond to concerns. The school works effectively with external agencies. Records show that swift actions are taken to support pupils at risk and that these actions are followed up systematically to ensure positive outcomes.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They are well informed about the risks they must avoid at school, in their life at home and in the community. For example, pupils are clear about how to safely use social media and the internet. The school also has effective ways of preventing bullying through its anti-bullying programme. On the rare occasions that bullying takes place, records show that it is dealt with swiftly. In discussions with inspectors, pupils confirmed that they trust staff to intervene if bullying occurs.

### **Inspection findings**

- In 2016, while most pupils made good progress across GCSE subjects, some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made slower progress. You have identified this issue as a priority for improvement and have analysed the causes of this relative lack of progress. You and your team have set up rigorous systems to track the progress of pupils in order to identify and address early signs of underperformance.
- This has led to more effective coordination of additional support for pupils whose progress is not sufficient. There is a heightened focus on the use of additional funding to provide resources to help disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities succeed. The 2017 GCSE results show an improvement in attainment for all groups, including those targeted for additional support. However, the challenge of reducing differences in progress that you identified still remains across a range of subjects. This is why you continue to challenge middle leaders and staff, with the support of governors and your senior team, to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special needs and/or disabilities make better progress.
- The progress of the most able pupils, including students in the sixth form, is one of the priorities you and your team are working on, linked to the improvement needed in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment identified in the previous inspection report. You are addressing the inconsistencies that still remain in the teaching of some subject areas to ensure more consistency for pupils. You are well supported in this task by the work of link governors who work closely with the leaders of subjects where practice needs improving.
- You have strengthened the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment in order to gather a wide range of evidence on the effectiveness of practice. You are continuing to develop a strong culture of accountability based on reliable information on pupils' progress. Leaders check pupils' attitudes in class and look at the work in their books rigorously to ensure that appropriate support is in place if they fail to make sufficient progress. You get effective challenge and support from the governing body. As a result, you, your leadership team and governors have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment which allows you to make improvements effectively.

- While attendance overall is above the national average, the attendance of some pupils was significantly lower in 2016 and improved only marginally in 2017. The recently appointed family support officer and the pastoral team are increasingly proactive in supporting pupils with a poor attendance record. Absences are followed up rigorously with written communication, meetings with parents or carers and home visits whenever it is appropriate. The school works closely with families and external agencies to tackle the causes of low attendance. Pupils with medical conditions receive personalised support and plans are in place to ensure that they can catch up.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make accelerated progress across GCSE subjects
- they continue to develop and embed strategies to improve the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils 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 Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Amieli  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors met with leaders to discuss safeguarding. They checked safeguarding documentation, including records of actions taken to keep pupils safe, as well as the school's single central record.

Inspectors scrutinised information about pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and policy documents. They met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, governors, trustees, parents, the family support officer, house support officer, subject leaders and pupils. They considered the 121 responses to Parent View and free-text responses, 91 responses to the staff survey and 216 responses to the pupil survey.