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Mr James Hutchinson  
Foxwood Academy  
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Nottinghamshire  
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Dear Mr Hutchinson

### **Short inspection of Foxwood Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Julian Scholefield, 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 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school at the beginning of this term, it is impressive how you have rapidly gained the respect of your team, including governors, and built positive relationships with the pupils. Your drive and determination for the school to offer the very best quality of education and care to the pupils it serves is evident. Indeed, governors describe how the school is 'on a journey now' as a result of leaders' aspirations to be outstanding.

You are ably supported by your senior leaders, who share your vision for the school and your eagerness for it to be the very best. Their leadership is respected and valued by staff.

Through accurate self-evaluation you, senior leaders and governors possess a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and are fully aware of what needs to improve, for example the consistency of teaching across the middle years of the school to ensure that all pupils fulfil their academic potential. In addition, you know you need to develop the middle leaders within the school to establish regular monitoring and clear lines of accountability to secure the best possible progress for pupils in all subjects. You are rapidly securing detailed and robust development plans showing how these areas are going to be quickly and effectively resolved.

Staff know pupils extremely well and are dedicated to meeting their academic and pastoral needs. As a result, pupils continue to thrive and make progress.

Parents speak positively about the school and are highly supportive. However, some say they would welcome a clearer understanding of how the pupil targets are set and what impact they have on their child's learning and development. Parents would also like the school to provide more clubs. Nevertheless, there were also many favourable comments, such as, the headteacher is a 'breath of fresh air', 'this is an amazing school with wonderful teachers' and 'my child is so happy at the school and making good progress'.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included: how the school ensures that pupils are safe; the effectiveness of leaders in ensuring that pupils make good progress, especially in reading; and how well leaders, including governors, ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and governors take a rigorous and consistent approach to safeguarding because there are many pupils who attend your school who are vulnerable in some way. There is a clear culture that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and staff, whatever their role, recognise the need for vigilance. Clear and well-understood procedures ensure that adults know how to refer concerns within the school to outside agencies. Leaders carefully monitor pupils and quickly follow up any concerns, not hesitating to escalate any serious concerns should they arise.

You, and other leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding records are detailed, up to date and of high quality. You ensure that staff receive regular training on keeping pupils safe. Leaders, including governors, understand the importance of carrying out checks on new staff and making sure recruitment procedures are rigorous. Recruitment records are accurate and comprehensive. Risk assessments are in place for specific pupil activities and leaders are diligent in ensuring that they are reviewed regularly.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and supportive. Consequently, pupils report and are clear that they feel safe and are happy during their time at school. They describe how staff look after them, teach them well and support them in dealing with worries or concerns. They understand bullying but confirm it rarely happens. If it does, it is quickly tackled by staff and, consequently, pupils enjoy their time at school, which is evident in their regular attendance.

### **Inspection findings**

- Governors, staff and parents talk with enthusiasm about securing your appointment as headteacher of Foxwood Academy. You are highly ambitious for the school and securing the best outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders, staff and governors share your determination to drive forward improvements. Therefore, the capacity of leaders at the school is strong.

- You have wasted no time in communicating your vision for the school, clearly setting out your high expectations and aspirations for the school in detailed improvement plans. You have rapidly settled into your role within the school, and with parents, and quickly set about working with staff to realise the vision.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have worked enthusiastically to improve pupils' outcomes and provide high-quality care. The teaching of reading, which was identified as an area for improvement, has been successfully tackled. Consequently, pupils now achieve well in reading, make good progress from low starting points and can share a love of reading as a result. You rightly identify the need to improve the planning and pitch of lessons in order to challenge pupils with different starting points to achieve the even higher standards you aspire to.
- Leaders monitor the quality of provision and pupil's progress regularly. When pupils fall behind and are not making sufficient progress, interventions are swift and effective in supporting pupils to catch up. All staff know each pupil extremely well and are aware of their highly complex needs. The curriculum covers a wide and impressive range of subjects, learning experiences and accredited courses and qualifications, including vocational provision based at Nottingham Hospital. This ensures that no pupil leaves the school without either a further education placement, employment opportunity or training course to attend.
- There is a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Younger pupils were excited by their capture and recall of number sequences using the electronic white board. Writing by older pupils demonstrated their sound grasp of complex and compound sentences. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school. In addition, there is a strong focus on developing life skills and securing appropriate qualifications. Some pupils were engrossed in art and science activities, while other pupils worked independently on GCSE mathematics questions. Nevertheless, you are correct in identifying the need to adopt the national standard descriptors to accurately moderate the achievements of pupils and set challenging targets for improvement.
- Staff, including newly qualified teachers, appreciate the opportunities afforded to them to develop their practice. They welcome the guidance given by leaders and value the training they attend to further develop their skills. They are well informed and knowledgeable about the latest child protection and safeguarding requirements. However, you are aware that more work needs to be undertaken to ensure that middle leaders, in particular, are accountable for the quality of education pupils receive.
- Irrespective of their role, staff describe how they are well supported by leaders and governors. They say leaders are approachable and that they are able to share any concerns they may have, confident they will be well supported. They comment particularly on the pastoral support they receive from leaders when working with children who often have significant and complex needs. This enables them to carry out their roles effectively, and provide pupils with a good quality of education and care.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leadership at all levels is fully developed throughout the school; leaders' monitoring holds teachers accountable for the quality of their teaching and outcomes for pupils
- all teaching is planned and pitched to meet the needs of pupils with widely differing starting points; targets for improvement are matched to current national standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Garnham  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

We met with you and your senior leaders. Together, we talked about the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. We observed the start of the day when pupils first arrive in school. We carried out a learning walk, visiting classes accompanied by you or your senior leaders. We also held discussions with four governors and held meetings with other members of staff. A telephone conversation took place with the base leader at Nottingham Hospital. We talked to pupils to gather their views.

We scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.

We considered two letters from parents during the day. We considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including eight written comments. In addition, 28 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.