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Ms Jane Benton  
Headteacher  
The Westwood Academy  
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Dear Ms Benton

### **Short inspection of The Westwood Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with Andrea Quigley, 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 June 2013.

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

The structure of the school's senior leadership team has not changed since the last inspection but the staff occupying the roles have. You were the deputy headteacher during the last inspection. Now, as the headteacher, you have been instrumental in developing the leadership roles of the members of your team and creating a shared vision of the type of education that you believe that your pupils deserve.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have high aspirations for pupils, and this permeates throughout the school and has a positive impact on the progress that pupils make from their different starting points and backgrounds. Examination results at key stage 4 and in the sixth form are good. However, at key stage 4 there is still some variation between subjects. You routinely monitor progress to identify areas for further improvement. The vast majority of pupils who completed the Ofsted online survey said that they were making good progress. However, some felt that there could still be more challenge in lessons.

Governors contribute significantly to the strength of leadership. They share your high expectations of pupils and staff. They also share your drive to provide education for pupils that prepares them well for their adult lives, academically, socially and emotionally.

You have built strong leadership at all levels and are developing a culture among staff in which professional development is seen as fundamental to improving the education of pupils. Middle leaders share your ambition and vision for the pupils in the school. You know your school well. Your school self-evaluation is accurate and based on robust evidence that is collected throughout the year. Staff at the school have created an environment in which pupils feel safe and cared for. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well supported and each child is seen as the responsibility of every member of staff. Parents appreciate the support that you give to their children. One parent wrote: 'My son has been made to feel very welcome and has settled in brilliantly.' The vast majority of staff at your school are proud to work there and feel supported. Your school is truly inclusive. Every pupil is valued and encouraged to fulfil their potential during lessons, or in one of the many clubs and societies that you provide after school. They wear their uniform with pride and move around the school purposefully.

The last inspection report asked you to address two issues in particular. The first focused on ensuring that teaching was consistently good or outstanding, by sharing good practice in planning lessons to meet pupils' needs. The second area for improvement focused on attendance. You have developed a range of strategies to engage parents and pupils in order to improve attendance. Although you have not, in the last two years, met the national average for attendance for all groups of pupils, the work that you are doing has meant that improvements have been made for some groups. Current attendance figures show a significant improvement overall.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders have ensured that checks on staff and other adults in the school are properly completed and recorded. Senior leaders and some governors are trained in safer recruitment and ensure that recruitment checks are thorough, clear and up to date. Staff receive thorough training in how to keep children safe, and receive regular updates on issues that may affect young people, including sexting, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. All new staff and visitors to the school have a safeguarding induction. There is clear and open communication between leaders with specific responsibility for safeguarding. This contributes to the culture of vigilance within the school. Staff work closely with young people and a wide range of external agencies who run workshops to meet pupils' individual needs; for example, young carers, Barnardo's and the NSPCC.

Pupils state that they feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have any safeguarding concerns. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and, if it does occur, is dealt with straight away. Pupils talk about lessons that they have had on how to keep themselves safe. They talk confidently about topics such as e-safety. The majority of parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school. This view is summarised by one parent who wrote: 'The school have worked very hard to settle new Year 7 pupils in, and have a caring nature and a pride in the school

which shines through from the teachers and the pupils.'

## **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have prioritised improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils overall and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally has diminished in 2017. Leaders have reallocated resources to increase staffing in science and humanities, which has had a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress. Leaders have accurately identified that the progress of disadvantaged pupils who do not join the school in September of Year 7 needs to improve. Leaders have developed an induction programme for new pupils in order to ensure that they integrate quickly into the school and are well supported.
- Leaders rigorously evaluate the spending of additional government funding to ensure that it has a direct impact on individual pupil progress. All staff, including teaching and support staff, are committed to raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. A variety of support is provided, ranging from a breakfast club and extra-curricular activities to home support. Pupils' individual needs are given the highest priority. Pupils are extremely positive about the support that they receive in school, both academically and socially.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has not improved as strongly in English as it has in mathematics. Leaders have responded quickly by ensuring that there is a greater emphasis in English lessons on preparation for the GCSE English language exam. Leaders have also adapted how they assess pupils' progress throughout the year. English lessons focus on the development of verbal and literacy skills in order to meet the needs of lower-ability pupils. All departments, including English and mathematics, prioritise the support that they give to disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of those pupils in Year 11 has improved. Teaching assistants are effective in lessons. They support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by asking probing questions and developing their independent learning skills.
- Teaching and learning in the school are good. Inspectors could see how whole-school raising achievement strategies were being applied with increasing consistency in lessons.
- Mathematics and science have shared successful strategies with other departments, for example systematic assessment and tracking of pupils. This has resulted in teachers knowing exactly when and how to support individual pupils.
- Leaders identified that progress in humanities subjects was not as strong as in other areas. They focused on improving teaching and learning in these subjects last year, and the 2017 results show that there was improvement in the progress of pupils in geography, but less so in history. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas and strategies to raise achievement in training sessions. As a result, progress in history is improving. Leaders have responded quickly by providing additional support, for example additional staffing to reduce class

size, and support from other schools, as well as sharing good practice within school.

- Leaders have identified teachers' continued professional development as vital to moving towards being an outstanding school. Analysis of the performance of specific pupils has resulted in training, focused on the needs of different groups, for example higher-ability pupils. Middle leaders have received training and developed skills to enable them to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning in their own department. This has resulted in subject-specific raising achievement strategies.
- Pupils behave well around the school and in their social time. They are polite, lively and courteous, and demonstrated many instances of respect for others during the inspection. Pupils move around the school safely. Pupils say that low-level disruption in lessons is rare, but it does happen in some subjects. Inspectors observed in lessons generally positive attitudes towards learning. However, there were a few occasions when a minority of pupils were off task or lapsed into chatting. The vast majority of pupils, staff and parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey think that behaviour is good in the school.
- The numbers of pupils who had a fixed-term exclusion were high from 2014 to 2017. These figures were above national averages. There is some evidence to show that leaders' higher expectations of pupils' behaviour may have resulted in these higher-than-average levels of fixed-term exclusions. Leaders monitor behaviour thoroughly and review on an individual pupil basis the most effective way to improve behaviour. There is evidence that the behaviour strategy is having a positive effect.
- Leaders and governors clearly identify attendance as an area that needs to improve further. Attendance of all pupils has improved over the last two years and currently stands above the national average for this academic year. Attendance figures for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have also improved. Persistent absence of pupils is still above the national average. A specialist team monitors attendance. However, attendance is a whole-school responsibility. The designated safeguarding lead works very closely with the attendance team to monitor pupils identified as vulnerable, in order to improve their attendance. Governors review rigorously the progress of the 'improving attendance action plan'. Leaders have developed aspects of the Year 10 curriculum with an aim to motivate and encourage vulnerable pupils to improve their attendance. Attendance and progress of pupils who are educated off the school site are monitored regularly.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed good teaching and learning strategies so that pupils make good or better progress in all areas of the curriculum

- attendance improves and that the number of pupils who are persistently absent reduces, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the number of fixed-term exclusions for all groups of pupils is reduced.

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

Yours sincerely

Karen Lockett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and senior leaders. I held a conference call with your chair of the governing body and met with one other governor. Inspectors had meetings with pupils, subject leaders, pastoral leaders and the business manager. Inspectors visited the on-site speech and language centre with a member of your staff. Inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons, including the sixth form, accompanied by you and members of the senior team. Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers during lessons. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school and during break, lunchtime and lesson changeover. Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, progress and attainment information, assessment information, safeguarding documents, records of checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with pupils, and information relating to referral to other professional agencies, attendance, behaviour and exclusions. Inspectors took account of the responses from 24 parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered questionnaires from 17 pupils and 29 staff.