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10 November 2017

Ms Kath Jordan  
Head of School  
Nidderdale High School  
Low Wath Road  
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Harrogate  
North Yorkshire  
HG3 5HL

Dear Ms Jordan

### **Short inspection of Nidderdale High School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 2017 with Dimitris Spiliotis, HMI, 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 December 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection, despite uncertainty around permanent leadership. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of different headteachers and consultant headteachers supporting the school. This has helped you to develop your strong leadership skills. Staff are confident in your ability to lead the school. From September 2017, alongside governors and the local authority, you have created an effective leadership model. This is allowing you to make accurate evaluations of the strengths of the school and areas that you need to develop further.

You and your team have tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report successfully. You provide teachers with relevant information about pupils' starting points and progress so that teachers plan learning to meet all pupils' needs. The quality of teaching is good and improving. Teachers and teaching assistants ask appropriate questions to challenge pupils to think carefully and deepen their understanding. The vast majority of pupils take pride in their work and where they do not, teachers address this appropriately.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they value the excellent relationships they have with teachers. Leaders' implementation of a new behaviour system is ensuring that behaviour remains good and is improving further. A small minority of pupils in Year 8 are slow to respond to the new system, and their

behaviour is not as positive as that of other pupils. Leaders, however, are aware of this and are taking appropriate action to improve this group's behaviour. Pupils' behaviour in social times is well ordered and calm. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors about their experiences and about school.

We agreed that an important area that you need to tackle is around securing permanent positions in leadership. We also agreed that leaders should improve the quality of analysis and evaluation of the rich amount of data and information about behaviour and attendance. This will allow leaders to be proactive rather than reactive in their approach to making sustained improvements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The highly knowledgeable and efficient safeguarding leader ensures that staff keep meticulous records of all child protection information. Appropriate action, including referrals to external agencies, takes place quickly to ensure that pupils are safe. A real strength is how well the safeguarding leader knows pupils in the school.

Staff receive appropriate training in child protection and staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They have a good awareness of the signs that would indicate that a pupil could be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that they carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff to work with pupils.

Pupils say that bullying sometimes does happen, but when it does, teachers and leaders tackle it swiftly so that it stops. School records show that pastoral staff carry out further checks to ensure that the bullying does not start again.

### **Inspection findings**

- You ensure that leaders review the curriculum every year so that it meets the needs of all learners. Where appropriate, bespoke provision is in place for pupils who need it. For example, some pupils have additional time in English and mathematics in key stage 3 to enable them to develop the skills and knowledge to be successful in key stage 4. This year, leaders are introducing functional skills in mathematics for some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they can achieve a mathematics qualification that is appropriate to their ability.
- Careers education takes place across all year groups and supports pupils in considering their GCSE options and post-16 choices. The provision for personal, social, health and economic education ensures that pupils learn about differences and diversity in life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about the risks they may face as they grow up and are confident in how they will deal with them, for example the risks associated with being online.
- Extra-curricular opportunities provide pupils with a variety of options to develop their skills, broaden their horizons and enhance their enjoyment of school. Pupils welcome opportunities to attend the theatre and take part in residential activities. Specific extra-curricular activities for vulnerable learners help them to develop

their confidence and literacy skills simultaneously.

- Leaders ensure that they spend additional funds for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who need to catch up effectively. A well-researched and targeted approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils to overcome their barriers to learning is ensuring that current pupils make at least good progress in their learning.
- The special educational needs coordinator is well qualified and highly knowledgeable. She tracks effectively the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make and puts in place appropriate support and interventions if they are at risk of falling behind. As a result, these pupils remain on track and also make good progress in their learning.
- Your restructuring of the pastoral team, from September 2017, following a dip in pupils' attendance, is ensuring that attendance and behaviour are improving. You and your leaders now have more information about pupils' attendance and both positive and negative behaviour. However, we agreed that the analysis of this information is an area to develop further.
- Most teachers use the information they have about pupils' starting points and current progress to plan learning activities that meet the needs of all learners well. Leaders are working effectively to ensure that this practice is consistent across the curriculum. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively. They ask challenging questions and support pupils so that they work hard and come up with answers for themselves.
- Leaders use performance management procedures well to ensure that all staff are working towards the school's priorities. Targets link to the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make so that leaders can hold staff to account for their pupils' achievements. Pupils' progress is improving as a result of such procedures and the improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and governors make effective use of external support from the local authority. This is ensuring that leaders receive effective challenge and continue to develop their leadership skills and capacity.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- swift action is taken to secure permanence in the leadership of the school
- leaders analyse and evaluate the data and information they collect about behaviour and attendance so that their approach to improvement is proactive rather than reactive.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Redshaw

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you and your senior leaders, governors, your school improvement partner and pupils. The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from conducting observations of learning and scrutinising pupils' work jointly with senior leaders. The inspection team checked and evaluated documents, including your child protection policy, safeguarding records, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning, performance management information, and pupils' progress information and attendance information. Inspectors also took account of the 86 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 79 extended responses from parents. They also took account of the 44 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.