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6 November 2017

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Dear Dr Richardson

Short inspection of Sheringham High School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with Her Majesty's Inspector Gwyneth Gibson, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Leaders' actions have made improvements which have led to the good outcomes achieved by pupils being sustained in recent years. Based on these good results, particularly the notable progress made by pupils in a range of subjects, you feel that this is an outstanding school. Inspectors judge it to be good rather than outstanding. There are aspects of mathematics and the sixth form that need developing further to ensure that the high aspirations you and your governors have for the school are met fully.

Outcomes for pupils are good. The above-average results achieved by pupils in Year 11 in 2016 improved further in 2017 to well above average.. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils met national expectations in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate was well above average. Furthermore, the better-than-average progress made by pupils throughout key stages 3 and 4 last year improved further in 2017. This year, on average, pupils achieved over half a grade higher than others nationally.

Pupils make exceptional progress in English, mainly because the subject leader and her team of staff provide pupils with consistently good teaching. In mathematics, overall progress has remained above average over the past two years, but pupils make less progress than they do in English. This is because the actions taken to

improve mathematics have not ironed out all of the inconsistencies in teaching.

You have made changes to the school's small sixth form to broaden its appeal to your own and other students locally. You and your governors are keen to ensure that it serves the local community well and more of your own pupils see it as their first choice at the end of Year 11. To achieve this, the curriculum has been broadened to include more vocational courses suited to students' vocational aspirations.

Leaders' actions to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are leading to improvement. Your records show that, currently, disadvantaged pupils make much better progress than in the past. Pupil premium funding has enabled you to tailor support for individual pupils and ensure that they are fully prepared for examinations. Clear plans are in place to make further improvements.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and say that it is a friendly place to be. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils conduct themselves very well. They value the range of lunchtime and after-school activities provided for them, but would like more sports activities. They feel that the school council works effectively and their views are listened to. Many of them contribute to school life by readily volunteering as captains, peer supporters and library assistants.

Safeguarding is effective.

The single central record is suitably maintained. It is checked regularly by governors. Trained designated leaders work as a team to ensure that they respond promptly to concerns and that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Policies and procedures are in place to protect children. Records of incidents or concerns are maintained fully and stored safely. Working relationships with local support agencies are well established. The school deploys its own support staff to engage with parents of pupils it has concerns about. Staff training in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, is up to date.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, a local secondary school and two primary schools have joined the North Norfolk Multi-Academy Trust and now work in partnership with your school. As chief executive of the trust, you share your time across this partnership effectively to ensure that you maintain a firm grasp of the performance of Sheringham High School. You, your senior leaders and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the actions needed to improve it further.
- To determine whether the school remained good, we followed four lines of enquiry during the inspection. These were based on the issues raised in the last inspection, recent performance information and an analysis of the school's and the trust's websites. We focused on the reasons for the school's high achievement and the actions taken by leaders to maintain this, the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils, the effectiveness of the sixth form and

the steps taken to ensure that pupils are suitably prepared for A-level studies and whether the school is a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be.

- You can demonstrate a track record of sustained good outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. Observations by inspectors, carried out jointly with your senior leaders, confirmed that, in general, good teaching leads to pupils' good learning and progress. Teachers know pupils well and forge good relationships with them. Teachers use their detailed subject knowledge to plan learning that promotes pupils' interest.
- English leads the way in developing teaching that stimulates and engages pupils in their learning. Staff have high expectations. They set pupils challenges that require them to work hard for extended periods of time and reflect on the quality of their writing. Effective questioning and discussion in groups encourage pupils to review their own and others' work to make it better.
- In science, pupils enjoy practical, hands-on tasks to help them learn. Information technology is used effectively to show them what to do and how to review their own learning. However, teachers do not make regular checks in some lessons to see if pupils are working hard enough or are coping well with tasks.
- Brief visits to mathematics lessons revealed a range of strengths and weaknesses. Teachers forge good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. They plan tasks to get pupils thinking and to work together to solve problems. Pupils work diligently but, at times, the most able pupils are not fully challenged. Not all teachers show pupils how to present their work neatly or review the different ways of completing calculations. You and your governors recognise the need for greater consistency and have rightly prioritised improving the quality of teaching to improve outcomes in mathematics in the school improvement plan.
- Your senior leaders carefully monitor the progress pupils make using your bespoke assessment procedures. This enables staff to respond promptly if pupils show signs of needing help and to target additional support for those at risk of underachieving. Review meetings with subject leaders hold them accountable for the results achieved each year. These reviews help to inform departmental plans for improvement and set suitable targets for managing the performance of staff.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to narrow gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils compared to others. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made much better progress than other pupils in the school and nationally. This was not sustained in 2016, mainly because disadvantaged pupils made less progress in mathematics. Prompt action to rectify this has worked. Progress in mathematics is better and the overall progress made by disadvantaged pupils this year is above average.
- The attendance of some disadvantaged pupils was too low last year. Leaders have taken action to improve it and, so far this year, attendance is above average. You have introduced more rigorous procedures to monitor absence and to tackle those pupils who do not attend regularly. Actions also include challenging the parents of pupils who are persistently absent from school and, if necessary, taking legal proceedings to improve matters.

- Leadership of the sixth form has been strengthened recently, and this is leading to improvement. The concern raised at the last inspection about students' awareness of the requirements for sixth-form study is being addressed. Year 11 pupils and their parents are provided with a wider range of information to inform their choices. All Year 11 pupils attend 'taster days' to gain a better understanding of sixth-form life. Expectations of students on entry have been raised. Prior to joining Year 12, pupils are interviewed to ensure that they are suited to A-level study and understand the task ahead.
- A-level results have fluctuated in recent years. Your latest records show that students make at least expected progress in the majority of, but not all, subjects. Securing and sustaining improvements remain a key priority in the school's improvement plan. Teaching is generally good, notably in the creative subjects like English, art and photography. Your assessment records show that the procedures to gauge how well students are doing in all of their subjects need sharpening to ensure that students meet all of their targets.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or sent free-text responses during the inspection felt that pupils are kept safe and are happy in school. Most of them also felt that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved. However, a significant proportion of them did not. We investigated this fully and confirm that the school is a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be. Following a complaint received by Ofsted in May 2017, we also wanted to make sure that pupils felt free from bullying. We looked closely at behaviour and bullying logs, observed pupils in and out of lessons and met with two groups of pupils.
- Pupils told us that they feel safe and that all forms of bullying are rare. They feel that, when it occurs, they can approach any member of staff to help them resolve matters. They also had confidence in the peer supporters they could go to for help. You have a team of non-teaching staff in place and two counsellors who visit the school each week to support pupils who have concerns. Your records show that only one incident of bullying has occurred over the past year.
- We found little to support the views of parents about behaviour. Your records show that very few pupils are excluded from school or are referred to your internal exclusion room. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of parents raised issues and you and your governors have more to do to communicate with them and allay their concerns. We were reassured by pupils who told us that the school is welcoming and friendly. However, they did say that, although behaviour in and out of lessons is good, they would like every teacher to manage it consistently in lessons so that all pupils 'understand the boundaries'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics are eradicated to enable pupils to progress as well in mathematics as they do in English
- the impact of the actions in the school improvement plan to improve the sixth

form are monitored rigorously to ensure that they lead to rapid and sustained improvements

- increase your communication with parents so that they are fully informed of the actions being taken by you and your staff to manage pupils' behaviour effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you and two other senior leaders, six members of the governing body, a group of key stage 3 and 4 pupils and a group of sixth-form students. We spent time outside of lessons at lunchtime observing pupils and chatting informally with them. You and another senior leader joined us to observe pupils at work in lessons. We reviewed your self-evaluation and improvement planning, safeguarding policy and procedures, including the single central record, and records of behaviour and attendance. We also considered 70 free-text responses from parents, 86 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, an email message from a parent and 36 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. No pupil questionnaires were completed.