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Mrs Jo Wood  
Executive Headteacher  
Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU)  
Lawnswood Avenue  
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WV4 6SR

Dear Mrs Wood

### **Short inspection of Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU)**

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017 with Chris Field, 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 leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of Midpoint Centre and they are taking effective action to make further improvements.

You have provided strong leadership and a clear vision, which has led to high aspirations for staff and pupils. Aply supported by your head of centre, effective senior and middle leadership and a strong management board, you have created a calm and solution-focused environment in which pupils can thrive.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is improving and most staff use learning time well. Activities usually build on what pupils know and can do so that they challenge pupils to move onto new learning rapidly. Feedback, particularly verbal comments, are used effectively to help pupils improve their writing. Literacy, numeracy, communication and an understanding of science are skilfully developed across the curriculum, particularly in vocational subjects.

Staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships and, where teaching is most effective, pupils show high levels of engagement. Staff have secure subject knowledge and use the good-quality facilities well to help pupils learn. The art room is awe inspiring as it is filled with high-quality work celebrating pupils' successes.

Pupils are taught by knowledgeable and passionate staff, but some inconsistencies

remain. A small number of teachers are not using well the information that is available to them to plan activities that build on prior learning and challenge pupils to make rapid progress. Not all teaching assistants have the marked impact on learning as the most effective members of staff, and the school's assessment policy is not used consistently. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration and disrupt learning because a few staff do not manage behaviour in their classroom as well as others.

However, behaviour in the school is improving. There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection, and the use of other sanctions, including fixed-term exclusions, is declining. As new systems have become embedded, there has been a marked improvement in behaviour in the last few months.

Attendance has improved since the last inspection. Many pupils start at the school having had very high absence rates in their previous settings. However, as a result of effective strategies to re-engage them in education, the vast majority improve their attendance. Parents are full of praise for the school's work in this area.

Improved attendance is rewarded, and there are robust systems to follow up absence. Dedicated staff support families to improve attendance and legal action is taken if required. Despite the school's work in this area, attendance is still too low and persistent absence is too high, which means that pupils miss lessons. Leaders recognise that this is one of the biggest challenges to improving the progress that pupils make.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture for keeping pupils safe. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, as leaders and managers have ensured that safeguarding duties are met. Staff have received thorough training and take appropriate action if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. They know that it is their responsibility to keep pupils safe.

Processes are thorough and concerns are followed up tenaciously. Referrals are timely and outside agencies are used well. Procedures to check on the well-being of pupils who are not in school are robust.

Pupils feel well supported. They are taught how to stay safe in a range of situations, including when using social media. Issues around the dangers of drugs, alcohol, knives, gang activity and grooming are covered in the curriculum.

### **Inspection findings**

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and adapted to meet the needs of different cohorts and individual pupils. Learning in the classroom is supported well by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including theatre visits and physical activities. It is used effectively to help pupils fill gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills and help them to prepare for life in modern Britain. It contributes well to pupils' behaviour and welfare, including their physical, mental

and personal well-being, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils who attend regularly make good progress at the school. Over time, an increasing proportion of pupils have been entered for a range of appropriate qualifications, including GCSEs. Outcomes in English, art, construction and science have been strong, and current pupils are making good progress across a range of subjects. As a result of improved teaching, progress in mathematics has now quickened.
- The relatively new system that staff use to collect information about what pupils know and can do is helping staff track the progress that pupils make. However, it is not yet fully embedded. Leaders are taking action to ensure that the information that staff enter is accurate and that all staff use it well to inform their planning. However, this is not yet done consistently so it does not yet give leaders all the information that they need to inform targeted action.
- Teaching continues to improve and there are many strengths in the school. However, not all teaching is of the highest standard to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress from their different starting points.
- School leaders have taken effective action to improve attendance, but some pupils do not arrive at school on time, and others do not attend on a regular basis. Leaders are aware that they need to take further action to reduce absence.
- The vast majority of pupils move onto further education or training when they leave the school. The curriculum, supported by impartial and good-quality careers guidance helps pupils to make informed choices about their future. Consequently, very few pupils do not move into education, employment or training, and some credit the school with helping them to lead purposeful adult lives.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further action is taken to improve attendance and punctuality
- teaching is consistently of the highest standard so that pupils make rapid progress in order to fill the gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding
- the assessment system is fully embedded so that it provides accurate information that:
  - teachers use consistently well to inform their planning
  - leaders can use to inform targeted action.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of centre, other leaders, staff, the chair and the vice-chair of the management board and a representative of the local authority.

We made short visits to a range of lessons with leaders and looked at pupils' files and books. Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally and observed behaviour during social time. We also spoke to a former pupil and a small number of parents.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked, and inspectors also looked at published information on the school's website.