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Mrs Samantha Roach
Principal
Tudor Grange Academy Worcester
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Worcestershire
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Dear Mrs Roach

Short inspection of Tudor Grange Academy Worcester

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 2018 with John Parr, 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 November 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You have overseen positive developments in your four years as principal. These include providing an academic curriculum suitable for most pupils, and improving pupils' overall GCSE progress score. The proportions of boys and girls entering and achieving the English Baccalaureate are above national averages over time. Pupils' attendance and behaviour have improved. The number of pupils wishing to join the school has increased. Staff morale is high.

The leadership culture you have developed neither denies nor makes excuses for any aspects of the school's work with which you are not yet satisfied. For example, you agree with inspectors' judgements that boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make weak progress over time at GCSE when compared with national figures. Leaders are ambitious to address this but have not been successful. This is because planning is not sharply focused, actions are insufficiently evaluated and there is a lack of consistency in teaching.

Governors fully support your work. They are wholly committed to the school and are involved appropriately in its work. There is a range of skills on the governing body to support leaders, including data analysis and financial management. Governors are proud of the improvement journey of the school.

Their genuine ambition to enhance the school's reputation, however, leads to an overly generous view of its performance. There is insufficient analysis of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, for example, at the expense of highlighting relatively strong attainment. Governors do not monitor and hold leaders sufficiently to account for the range and impact of activities they undertake.

Pupils' and staff's well-being matter greatly to you. All pupils who spoke with inspectors say they enjoy school. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire enjoy working at the school and felt leaders were considerate of their well-being. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to others. One parent commented, 'a brilliant school and I have very happy children attending it'.

Inspection evidence confirmed a clear focus upon school values in assemblies, displays and in discussions with pupils. Your school culture develops personable pupils who are polite to visitors, staff and each other. Pupils speak highly of the school, including the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. They wear their uniform smartly and during the inspection conducted themselves well in lessons and at social times. Pupils described the school as 'welcoming and accepting'.

During our meetings, I explained how the school website does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are fit for purpose. There are thorough checks on staff before they join the school and verification on the suitability of all visitors. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained to keep pupils safe. Records show how leaders rigorously follow up training to ensure it has an impact. A new electronic system ensures that any concerns about pupils are swiftly addressed.

Pupils said they feel safe at school and there is timely management of any issues raised. Pupils enjoy 'life skills' lessons, learning how to manage potential risks to themselves. For example, they learn how to keep safe online and from political or religious extremism. In discussions with inspectors, pupils explained how they learn about gender and sexual identity and staying healthy.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to focus upon how the continuing low progress of groups of learners was being addressed. You accept that this situation needs to improve; however, current information shows that boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continue to underachieve. While clearly identified in your self-evaluation, plans to improve outcomes for these pupils are not succinct. There are 37 'next steps' and 45 'key performance indicators'. There are also other targets in departmental reviews and plans. It is not apparent what is and is not working to improve teaching, learning and outcomes.

This is because there is insufficient clarity on how strategies and actions are being introduced, evaluated, built upon or abandoned.

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the need to focus upon high-quality teaching and learning to boost progress. The continuing professional-development programmes offered to teachers are well received. There is evidence of good practice by teachers. For example, in some lessons questioning is effective in getting pupils to develop responses more fully, expand their ideas and improve overall understanding. Teachers are clear about how their good relationships with pupils help improve standards.
- There was less evidence to suggest that school policies to address low progress are being implemented consistently. During some work reviews with inspectors, leaders expressed disappointment that their assessment requirements to support disadvantaged pupils were not met. Pupils speak of different experiences in some lessons and across subjects. For example, they described variability in the importance that teachers give to pupils knowing and understanding their target grades and in the help they receive to improve their work. Leaders feel more time is required to check what is happening in lessons to support pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school receives a relatively high level of pupil premium funding because almost a third of pupils are disadvantaged. Leaders' plans to spend this money have not led to accelerated progress. School records for Year 11 pupils indicate that the difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school is as large as in previous years. This group is, however, performing better at key stage 3. Nonetheless, leaders accept the need to address barriers to learning to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress.
- Progress in the sixth form was below average in 2017. Inspection evidence indicates that leaders are improving standards closer to the strong performance seen in 2016. Students' attendance and homework completion have improved. Also, leaders understand the individual support some students require to meet their targets. Students who entered the sixth form having attained the equivalent of an average grade C at GCSE performed poorly in 2017. Current students with this prior attainment, while not yet performing to expectation, are making progress closer to expectation.
- Evaluating the impact of leaders' work to improve attendance and reduce fixed-term exclusions was another key aspect of this inspection. There has been much success with overall attendance and punctuality improving. Fixed-term exclusions have fallen markedly. This is partly the result of successful work to manage some pupils' attitudes to learning via TATE (Tudor alternative to exclusion). The improvement in attendance is currently less marked for those pupils, especially boys, who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders are aware of this and strategies are in place. The school's permanent-exclusion rate remains above the national average as it has done for several years.
- A few pupils are educated in off-site provision. Leaders have systematic procedures in place for monitoring the progress and welfare of these pupils. Leaders assess pupils' needs and liaise with the local authority before removing

pupils from the school roll to continue in alternative provision. Nonetheless, most of these pupils are boys whose needs have not been met by the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement plans are precise enough to improve pupils' progress urgently, especially for boys, and allow governors to hold leaders to account for their actions
- effective systems to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching are fully developed and strong practice in teaching is shared across the school
- the impact of initiatives for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is evaluated robustly so these pupils make at least good or better progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Griffiths
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we held meetings with you and senior leaders. I held a meeting with the chair of the academy trust, the chair of the local governing board and a governor. We made observations of learning across the school, some jointly with senior leaders. We looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. We spoke with pupils formally and informally at break and lunchtimes. We scrutinised a variety of documents including the school's self-assessment and development plans, assessment records, departmental plans, records of recruitment checks, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and information relating to attendance and exclusions. We took account of responses to questionnaires from 63 staff. We considered 150 responses from parents to the Ofsted Parent View online survey.