

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



25 May 2018

Dr Paul Bell  
Headteacher  
Horsforth School  
Lee Lane East  
Horsforth  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS18 5RF

Dear Dr Bell

### **Short inspection of Horsforth School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2018 with Tim Johnson and Steve Crossley, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 2013.

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

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in 2016, you swiftly reviewed all areas of school performance. You invested heavily and restructured your senior leadership team. You acted quickly and decisively to challenge any weak teaching. You reinforced the school's motto of 'opportunities and achievement for all'. Through your determination, passion and commitment in relation to continuous improvement, you have ensured that leadership at all levels is focused on the progress of all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As a result, outcomes of pupils have improved since the last inspection.

Since your appointment, you have implemented strategically developed systems and processes, which allow you and your senior leaders to identify correctly areas of the school that need improvement. Governors receive detailed information about school performance, which they use effectively to provide challenge to leaders at all levels. The recent appointments to the governing body further strengthen their knowledge and expertise. As a result, there is strong capacity in the school's leadership to achieve the improvements that you aspire to in order to become an outstanding school.

You and your leadership team have tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report successfully. At the last inspection you were asked to

improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching which accelerates the progress of pupils, particularly the disadvantaged pupils. You and your leaders ensure that the progress of pupils is at the heart of what you and your staff do, daily. Very quickly you raised the profile of the importance of the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

At the last inspection, you were also asked to ensure that leaders and managers, including subject leaders, accurately evaluate the progress disadvantaged pupils make. You were also advised to ensure that learning in all subjects improves the progress of this group of pupils. Through your increased focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, all staff now use assessment information effectively to plan learning activities. You appointed staff as pupil premium champions and leaders to oversee the progress of these groups of pupils. As a result, teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Consequently, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved rapidly and the gap in attainment between those groups of pupils and other pupils in the school is closing rapidly

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your senior leader responsible for safeguarding leads her team well. They are knowledgeable, proactive and vigilant. Together, they regularly monitor the well-being of vulnerable pupils. The school has effective referral procedures and communication with external agencies is good overall. The recent introduction of an electronic system further strengthens and supports the recording and monitoring of safeguarding concerns.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Your designated safeguarding lead has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. This means that information is shared effectively and in a timely way. All staff and governors receive appropriate training in child protection, including the dangers of radicalisation. You and your team ensure that you carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff who work with pupils.

When inspectors met with pupils, they reported that they feel safe, know who to go to if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any problems. Inspection evidence also supports this. Pupils know how to stay safe on line. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but when it does happen, teachers and senior leaders tackle it quickly. Some parents reported that they are less confident in the school's handling of bullying, and about behaviour in school. However, you are not complacent, and continually review and improve the support that is in place for pupils.

The relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and are respectful to each other and staff. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. As a result, behaviour in the vast majority of lessons and conduct around the school site are very good.

## Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved, including the progress of the disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, the progress of all pupils was in line with the national average and in 2017 it improved to be above the national average. Current school information and inspection evidence indicate that progress for all pupils continues to improve further.
- Outcomes for students in the sixth form have continued to improve since the last inspection. Leaders of the sixth form have a comprehensive understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and have taken appropriate actions to respond to areas for improvement. Students who underperform are identified early and appropriate support is put in place. Disadvantaged students achieve as well as their peers and the bursary funding is used effectively.
- In 2017, you correctly identified that the progress of the disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was very disappointing. You described it as unacceptable. You and your team have ensured that extensive, thorough and detailed analysis of pupils' performance provides you with accurate information about strengths and weaknesses in different subjects and for different groups of pupils. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school has improved significantly in the vast majority of subjects. Similarly, through effective support, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has also improved. You and your leaders continue to monitor closely the outcomes of pupils in modern foreign languages, business studies and design technology. You agreed with me that more work is needed to ensure continuous improvement in arts subjects.
- You and your leaders have ensured that there are thorough monitoring systems in place, which show that the quality of teaching is good and improving. You have reviewed leadership at all levels and have appointed staff in English, mathematics and science as pupil premium champions as well as leaders with an overview of provision for disadvantaged pupils.
- You and your governors have increased the accountability of your subject leaders. They are increasingly involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their departments. You and your leaders carry out frequent monitoring of teaching and learning strategies and their impact on the progress of pupils, especially the disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, the vast majority of teachers provide appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils and use questioning effectively to probe understanding. You and your team have correctly identified subjects for further support.
- The attendance of pupils overall is improving year on year, and is above the national average. You and your leaders analyse extensively and thoroughly the attendance of all groups of pupils. Your senior leader responsible for the attendance and behaviour of pupils works tirelessly with her team to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities improve their

attendance. Your focused actions have resulted in improvements to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4. However, there is a slight decline in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3. We agreed that more work is needed in this area to ensure that the attendance of the disadvantaged pupils continues to improve consistently. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved significantly since last year.

- Since your appointment in 2016, you have raised expectations of behaviour across the school. You and your leaders use nurture groups effectively in Years 7 and 8 to support some pupils with their behaviour and when they struggle socially or emotionally. Your senior leader responsible for behaviour and her team analyse the behaviour of all pupils extensively and frequently. You have introduced various initiatives to raise aspirations, especially of the disadvantaged pupils, such as mentoring by members of the senior leadership team and external business mentors. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced drastically, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve further the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
- they improve further the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in all subjects and especially in arts.

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

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior leaders, middle leaders and governors. I held telephone conversations with leaders from two alternative provision settings. The inspectors also met with a range of pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 and students from Years 12 and 13.

Inspectors conducted tours of the school and visited a range of lessons, some with senior leaders, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. The inspectors, alongside senior leaders, also conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects, including work produced in the sixth form.

The inspection team scrutinised and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and school improvement. Inspectors took account of the 173 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 163 extended responses from parents. They also took account of the 21 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 74 responses to the staff questionnaire.