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4 July 2018

Mr Nicholas Hinchliffe
Principal
Selby High School Specialist School for the Arts and Science
Leeds Road
Selby
North Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Hinchliffe

Short inspection of Selby High School Specialist School for the Arts and Science

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2018 with Stephen Crossley, Ofsted Inspector, and John McNally, 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.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your senior leadership team, governors and staff share a common vision of 'excellence for all' and work collectively to secure the changes needed to make that vision a reality for every member of the school community.

Since your appointment in June 2017, you have demonstrated your determination to ensure that the school is focused on 'embracing diversity', 'unlocking potential' and 'inspiring learning'. You recognise that these are long-term aims, but you are resolute in encouraging staff and pupils to take pride in the school and in their work and to take an active role in moving the school forward in its next stage of development.

Your self-evaluation is precise and accurate. Leaders know what is going well and what needs to improve. You make good use of external reviews of the school. You and your governors are outward looking, and you are successfully learning from other schools to improve Selby High School for both staff and pupils. Your staff are very positive about the changes that you have made and are confident in the future direction of the school.

The school is a safe and orderly environment. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and during social times. You have set high standards of behaviour. School

routines and high expectations are reinforced by the majority of staff. The clear majority of pupils are polite and respectful to each other, adults and visitors. They are proud of their school and want to do well in lessons. Pupils are very aware of the school's values and the higher expectations required following the changes that you have introduced. Pupils are clear that, following these changes, fewer lessons are being disrupted and, as a result, pupils are making better progress.

At the last inspection, the then principal was asked to improve the quality of questioning so that pupils can think more deeply about their learning. Leaders and teachers value the partnerships that you have developed with other schools in providing advice and professional development, and they affirm that these have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The introduction of the 'Independent Zone' in lessons has given pupils the opportunity, and time needed, to develop their thinking. As a result, they are making greater progress. Your performance management of teachers is rigorous, and teachers value the support and encouragement that they are given to improve their practice.

Governors know the school well. They recognise that, since the last inspection, they have developed into a more resolute group. They now ask suitably challenging and incisive questions of senior leaders, ensuring that leaders are focused on improving the school for the benefit of the pupils and the local community. Governors have acted on the review of governance that they commissioned with care and consideration. They have great confidence that the changes you have made since your appointment are improving the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and effective. Your procedures are well organised and your policy documentation thorough. Leaders and staff work together to ensure that the school is a safe place so that pupils can achieve excellence. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are both happy and feel safe at school.

The school's records of recruitment checks are thorough, clear and up to date. Your systems are robust and leaders ensure that no member of staff begins their employment until they have carried out the necessary checks. Several leaders and governors have accessed safer recruitment training.

Your pupils can name several adults to whom they can go if they need any support or advice. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and understand the changes that you have made to ensure their safety and well-being. Pupils say that they are well informed about keeping themselves safe and are confident that when bullying occurs, the school will deal with it both quickly and effectively. Pupils speak positively about their 'Life Development' lessons and how they are taught how to keep themselves safe from risks, including when using social media and the internet.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have made several decisive changes to the school since the appointment of the new principal, and most of these changes have been positively received by pupils, parents and staff. However, as one governor remarked, 'change brings uncertainty', and these higher expectations have presented challenges to some pupils. Most staff and pupils are proud of their school and the changes taking place.
- Inspectors observed effective teaching where teachers' enthusiasm was shared by their pupils. Pupils engage in their learning and are keen to make progress. Skilful use of questioning in an English lesson observed enabled the teacher to help pupils to deepen their understanding of 'An Inspector Calls'. Pupils were able to describe with confidence the purpose of the work that they were doing. In an art photography lesson, pupils were able to talk with confidence about how to improve their work based on the high quality of feedback given.
- Teaching assistants work effectively to support those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and to help them sustain their concentration and complete their work.
- Leaders are aware that, on occasion, boys are not engaged well enough in learning. This leads to some low-level disruption or boys switching off from learning. Although behaviour is improving, not all boys have developed a consistently positive approach to learning and some boys lack the self-confidence to participate fully in lessons. You are aware of this issue and you are taking action to address it. However, initiatives to raise outcomes for boys and disadvantaged pupils are too new to have had any demonstrable impact.
- Leaders are clear about the need to improve outcomes and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, especially those with social, emotional and/or mental health needs. They have undertaken a local authority review of their work and taken specialist advice. Leaders have implemented a range of strategies, including increased levels of training, improved deployment of teaching assistants and more focused literacy interventions. This has led to much improved progress in English and mathematics, especially in Year 7 and Year 8. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that all teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of their pupils.
- Pupils are mostly given astute advice about how to improve their work. However, this is not as routine or as widespread as the school expects and there are some inconsistencies within subjects.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' achievement was below that of other pupils nationally. However, current disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving. This is due to improved teaching, higher expectations of pupils' achievement and more targeted use of pupil premium funding. The focus of pupil premium funding has been sharpened and, consequently, it is more focused on initiatives that take account of best practice nationally. As yet, individual pupil premium initiatives and activities, such as the introduction of 'The Bridge', are not yet evaluated for impact and so the effectiveness of these strategies is inconclusive.

- The small number of pupils who access off-site, alternative provision, such as the Rubicon Centre and Countryside Classrooms, are well supported in their studies by your staff and other staff in the centres. Their progress is not as strong as that of their peers in the school. However, the curriculum that they are following is appropriate to their needs and prepares them for their next steps in education, training and employment. The bespoke arrangements that leaders have made to meet the many complex needs presented is giving these pupils a more positive experience of school.
- Attendance of pupils overall in the school is improving. Leaders have worked relentlessly on attendance and you have made staffing changes to refocus this work. Despite these efforts, absence and persistent absence rates for pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, remain high and you recognise that this must change urgently.
- Pupils spoke positively about the changes that you have introduced. Pupils across the school are enthused by the numerous pupil leadership opportunities and the work of the 'Student Welfare Council'. Key stage 4 pupils spoke passionately about the extra-curricular activities on offer, especially in sport and music, and were grateful for these opportunities. They were keen for inspectors to note that the Year 10 boys were recently crowned North of England Futsal Regional Champions. Pupils expressed concern that some lessons are disrupted by the behaviour of a minority of pupils. Nevertheless, they say with confidence that this is improving since the introduction of the new behaviour policy. They are also very pleased with the proposed introduction of a new one-way system to make it easier for pupils to move around the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school evaluates its actions more precisely so that boys and disadvantaged pupils make better progress from their starting points
- urgent action is taken to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and reduce the number who are persistently absent
- all teachers provide the correct support and challenge for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that outcomes for these pupils improve
- the school behaviour policy is consistently applied by staff and followed by all pupils so that the number of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, who are excluded from school is reduced.

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

Daniel Murray
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings took place with you and members of your middle and senior leadership teams and other members of staff. Meetings also took place with members of the governing body, a group of pupils from Year 10 and key stage 3 pupils. Inspectors examined the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and monitoring records concerning teaching, attendance, exclusions and leavers' destinations. Inspectors also examined pupils' work from a variety of subjects, year groups and abilities. This included the work of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors listened to a selection of key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils read. Inspectors met with the school improvement partner from the local authority. The record of checks on staff was checked and relevant safeguarding procedures were reviewed. Learning was observed by inspectors alongside members of the senior leadership team in each key stage. Inspectors received and considered 64 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, 72 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 103 responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Parent View.