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Mr Luke Weston
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Dear Mr Weston

Short inspection of Bingley Grammar School

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2018 with Elizabeth Cresswell and Peter Cole, 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 Bingley Grammar School was judged to be good in March 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 have created a clear vision and worked closely with staff, pupils, parents and carers to achieve it. The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Consequently, the outcomes achieved by pupils have improved over time. Pupils do indeed 'belong, grow and succeed', as stated in the school motto.

However, you are not complacent. In our discussions, you told me, 'We are always looking ahead. We want to get better.' You have been able to focus your efforts where they are needed because leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvements are evident in many aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and leadership.

As a result of your commitment to staff development and links with local universities, training programmes for staff are helping to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. Teachers know their pupils well. They plan effectively to meet each pupil's additional, and individual, needs. Teachers challenge the vast majority of pupils appropriately. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute well to their improving rates of progress in a wide range of subjects. You acknowledge that, in the past, the support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities could have been better. Recently, you appointed a new special

educational needs coordinator and a teacher with responsibility for pupils who enter the school with below-average standards of attainment. Consequently, current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from improving pastoral care and highly effective transition programmes when they leave primary school. Rates of progress for this group of pupils are starting to improve.

You frequently review the school's curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of different groups of pupils. Recently, you have broadened the curriculum in the sixth form to give students the opportunity to study more subjects that link closely to jobs that interest them. Similarly, following an evaluation of GCSE option subjects, pupils are able to study an additional qualification at the end of the school day. As a result, an increasing number of pupils continue their learning in subjects that they may not have been able to previously.

You introduced a new behaviour policy in 2016 and refined it further this year. Evidence, including pupil and parent responses to Ofsted's inspection questionnaires, demonstrates that behaviour is good and improving. Pupils understand what you expect from them in and around school. During the inspection, pupils were courteous and eager to share their positive opinions of the school with inspectors. Pupils move between lessons briskly, and punctuality to lessons is excellent. This is no mean feat, considering the expansive nature of the site and the current building work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Current checks on the suitability of adults who work with pupils are thorough.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe at school and at home. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and know who to talk to if they are worried or have a concern. Safeguarding leaders receive regular training, and important messages are shared with staff on a weekly basis. Pupils welcome the opportunity to communicate their ideas with leaders. They are particularly pleased to learn that, following their suggestions, new 'anti-bullying ambassadors' are soon to be appointed.

Inspection findings

- Leaders responsible for attendance have developed positive relationships with the families of pupils who attend less often. When staff identify that a pupil's attendance is declining, they swiftly instigate open and honest discussions relating to the barriers to good attendance. Leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance has had a positive impact in most areas. Following a decline last year, attendance rates are now above average. However, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are more likely to be absent from school than their peers. Similarly, persistent absence rates for both pupil groups are high and, at this stage, show no sign of improvement.
- Published performance information for the last two years highlights that pupils at

the end of key stage 4 make progress that is above that of other pupils nationally. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. However, because of stronger teaching over time, the proportion of pupils who attain a GCSE level 4+ in English and mathematics is above average.

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made the least progress, including in English, science and humanities. Work scrutiny of current pupils' books showed that teachers have high expectations of pupils and provide effective challenge and support. This, and more effective leadership of SEN provision, is contributing to improving rates of progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders, including governors, allocate additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils through a wide range of appropriate strategies. Leaders review the impact of their spending frequently. They are not afraid to admit when plans need amending or, in some instances, ending. Notwithstanding this, disadvantaged pupils' progress was below average in 2016 and 2017. Leaders told inspectors that a large number of disadvantaged pupils are in part-time employment. Consequently, pupils are unable to dedicate a similar amount of time to their studies as their peers or attend after-school revision classes. Where the latter is true, leaders have used additional funding effectively to pay for extra tuition for disadvantaged pupils, at a time that suits them. This highly personalised approach is contributing to improving rates of progress for current disadvantaged pupils.
- Inspection evidence demonstrates that systems to assess pupils' understanding and skills are well developed. Leaders monitor and analyse the progress of pupils frequently. They subsequently share the main strengths and areas for development with subject leaders and teachers so that they can amend teaching plans if necessary. However, as one leader described, while the process of assessing pupils and intervening attempts to solve a problem, it results in only a temporary, or minor, improvement. Leaders were unable to explain the underlying reasons why teaching, learning and assessment do not lead to disadvantaged pupils making similar rates of progress to those of others.
- The quality of provision for post-16 students is good. Sixth-form students make progress that is slightly higher than the national average. Students who enter the sixth form with an average GCSE grade of a C make the most progress. An increasingly diverse curriculum is contributing to improving rates of retention, particularly at the end of Year 12. During the inspection, sixth-form students said that their learning experiences are extremely positive. They described the 'community feel' and strong teaching as contributing factors. A minority of students told inspectors that the careers information they received prior to joining the sixth form could have been improved. Nevertheless, the proportion of learners who do not go on to education, employment or training at age 16 or 18 is very small.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities attend school more often
- leaders use pupils' assessment information more effectively to identify and address the underlying issues that have caused disadvantaged pupils to underachieve over time
- the recent improvements in the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are maintained so that they achieve stronger outcomes in a wide range of subjects, including English, science and humanities.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and other members of the leadership team. My inspector colleagues and I accompanied senior leaders during observations in classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' written work. Inspectors spoke to governors, teachers, pupils and sixth-form students. I analysed the school's website, and inspectors evaluated a wide range of additional documentation including the record of suitability checks on staff, safeguarding policies and associated files, in addition to attendance and behaviour logs. I conducted a detailed analysis of the school's performance information, action plans and leaders' evaluations. We took into account the 205 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. One hundred and twenty-five members of staff completed Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. One hundred and ninety-five pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. All of these responses were taken into consideration by inspectors.

This inspection particularly focused on a number of key questions:

- How successful are leaders' strategies for improving overall attendance and reducing persistent absence, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities?
- Are leaders' actions having a positive impact so that disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment rapidly improve, particularly in English, science and

humanities?

- Does the curriculum provide equality of opportunity and does it promote improving rates of progress?
- Have leaders and governors successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, including those linked specifically to teaching, learning and assessment?
- Is the 16 to 19 study programme provision in the school at least 'good'?
- Is safeguarding effective?