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Shaun Whittingham  
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Dear Mr Whittingham

### **Short inspection of Leicester Partnership School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2018 with Heather Hawkes, 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 September 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.**

Leaders have successfully maintained a culture where pupils feel safe and where trust and mutually respectful relationships are evident between staff and pupils. This is a real strength of the school. Pupils, parents and carers are positive about the school and feel well informed and supported. A typical parental comment was: 'It's brilliant, it's like I've got a different lad!' Behaviour is well managed.

Pupils have access to a wide range of vocational programmes of study, all of which can lead to an accredited qualification. These include sport and active leisure, skills for employment, hair and beauty, art and design and music. A wide variety of providers support these vocational courses. Those who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the close links with school leaders. They value the supportive arrangements for course induction and teachers' weekly visits to check on the progress, safety and attendance of pupils.

Leaders have had some success in responding to the areas needing improvement identified at the school's last inspection. They have provided external training to staff and have developed closer accountability through performance management. Inspectors noted some examples where questioning was used skilfully. For example, in one English lesson, pupils were studying Shakespearian insults. The class tackled difficult language features, supported by skilful questioning from both the teacher

and teaching assistant. This level of skill is not yet consistent and is less effective when the work is not matched well to each pupil's ability.

The last inspection identified the need to ensure that pupils understand how to improve their written work. Leaders have not taken effective action to improve this aspect of teaching. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing. Furthermore, teachers do not ensure that pupils understand how they can improve their work. This leads to pupils making the same mistakes repeatedly.

Leaders have developed a sophisticated assessment system to evaluate pupils' progress from their starting points. However, teachers' assessments of pupils' progress is not yet accurate, particularly in writing and mathematics. Teachers do not ensure that work is matched to pupils' different abilities. The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, which limits their progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

A senior pastoral behaviour support worker is assigned to each pupil. They work closely with the pupil, their family and other professionals to ensure that the pupil is successful at school and keeping safe. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. This includes the arrangements in place at the various other vocational sites.

Leaders check pupils' attendance closely. An online system provides real-time updates for the school to track attendance across the many alternative locations. Attendance is below average for all schools, but above the national average for schools of a similar context.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that promotes the health, safety and welfare of pupils at school and in the wider community. The success of this is reflected in the very-positive relationships and behaviour seen in the school during the inspection.

Systems for recording and analysing incidents of poor behaviour and physical intervention are effective. Incidents are comprehensively documented and this includes appropriate post-incident feedback, which includes pupils' and parents' views. Leaders place a high priority on ensuring that staff are well trained and alert to the signs of pupils who may be at risk of harm.

### **Inspection findings**

- The key lines of enquiry for this inspection focused on leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and assessment, progress in English and mathematics and how prepared pupils are for the next stage of their development and education.
- Leaders and governors do not use the school's assessment system well enough to check and challenge pupils' academic achievement. In their monitoring activities, they have too often focused on the performance of teachers rather than the progress of pupils. Consequently, they have not been quick enough to

identify that pupils' underperformance in English and mathematics has been masked by more positive outcomes in vocational courses.

- Over time, pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics have been variable. Teachers do not precisely identify the next steps in learning for pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics. In particular, the most able pupils are not moved on quickly enough to more challenging work. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress, or attain the academic qualifications, of which they are capable by the end of key stage 4.
- Teachers are not consistently effective in identifying the precise support needed to help pupils accelerate their progress in English and mathematics. They do not provide well-targeted additional help to promote and deepen pupils' learning. In some classes, teachers and teaching assistants use skilful questioning to promote pupils' understanding, but this is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils in key stage 3, in particular, make good progress in subjects such as art. Pupils use a range of media including collage, textiles and ceramics to develop a wide range of skills. They take pride in their work, and this is reflected in the high standards they achieve.
- A significant proportion of pupils in key stage 3 successfully return to a mainstream, alternative or special school setting. The majority of pupils continue to be successful in their new location.
- Leaders have identified a weakness with the external careers guidance support they were using, and have acted quickly to change this support. However, it is too early to evidence any positive impact this may have in ensuring that more pupils move to suitable education, employment or training at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils often collaborate well. For example, in a physical education lesson, boys and girls participated eagerly and energetically together, with a common sense of fun and enjoyment. This epitomised the vision and values of the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders ensure that pupils achieve as well in English and mathematics as they do in vocational subjects, particularly in key stage 4
- leaders' and governors' checks on pupils' performance in English and mathematics are more effective in improving pupils' outcomes in these subjects
- teachers use their assessment of pupils' progress more effectively to ensure that work is better matched to the learning needs of pupils, particularly the most able pupils in key stage 3
- teachers more effectively identify and provide well-targeted support for those pupils who need to improve quickly their rates of progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Karen Hayes

**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the assistant headteacher, both heads of centres and the head of alternative and pastoral services. We also met with teachers and members of your pastoral support team. Inspectors reviewed lessons and a range of pupils' work with you or another member of your team. We met with the chair of the management committee and, separately, two other members of the committee. We met with your raising achievement coordinator from the local authority. We reviewed records about how the school keeps pupils safe, and pupils' attendance and behaviour. We studied the school's self-evaluation and a number of school policies. We spoke with two parents and three of the school's vocational providers. We met with five pupils and considered a range of information available on the school's website.