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28 September 2018

Mr Stuart Turnbull  
Principal  
Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy  
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Dear Mr Turnbull

### **Short inspection of Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2018 with Michael Onyon and Bernice Astling, 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 May 2015.

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.**

Since the last inspection, standards in the school have declined. Outcomes in 2016 were weak and outcomes in 2017, although improving, remained significantly below national averages in a range of subjects. These weaknesses included progress in key subjects such as English, mathematics, science and humanities. In 2016, pupils' behaviour had also declined.

Following your appointment as principal in 2016, you and other senior leaders have demonstrated an unwavering drive to improve the school in order to be able to offer an excellent standard of education for your pupils. Together, you have worked hard to bring about a change in culture and raise pupils' aspirations. This work is beginning to show clear signs of a positive impact. Behaviour is better, teaching is improving, and the school is a calm and orderly learning environment.

However, challenges still remain. You are aware of them and are tackling them methodically and with a clear focus on raising pupils' achievement. You acknowledge that standards have declined in the past. As a result, you have successfully addressed staffing issues and teacher recruitment problems. There has

been a significant change in staffing and 2018/19 is the first academic year in which the school is fully staffed with specialist teachers in every learning area. You have formulated focused and effective action plans to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. However, these plans are less detailed and appropriate for the sixth form. There, the improvement strategies are less focused and not sharply targeted. Your improvement strategies are a work in progress, but some impact is already evident, especially the improving quality of teaching and behaviour of pupils. Nevertheless, it is too early to see the impact your actions are having on raising pupils' achievement and bringing their progress in line with other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

Pupils enter the school with below average prior attainment and weak literacy skills. You have recognised this and implemented a wide range of strategies to improve pupils' basic literacy skills. Literacy also features in your school improvement plan and holds a high priority across the school. The impact of these strategies remains inconsistent, however. Pupils' work continues to show many examples of common spelling and grammar misconceptions.

In 2017, almost all Year 11 pupils completed the European computer driving licence (ECDL). Much of the improvement in the 'open' element in pupils' progress came from this and similar qualifications in 2017. The ECDL course was not a valuable qualification for some pupils because they had already covered most of the content in their IT GCSE qualification or because the ECDL was not challenging enough for them. You have adapted the curriculum to make sure that more pupils now take a range of academic courses which meet their needs and aspirations, and the ECDL qualification is no longer taught.

A notable number of pupils, especially from key stage 4, leave the school during the academic year. Your leaders keep records of these pupils and their destinations. However, they do not routinely analyse the characteristics of these pupils. As a result, you and other leaders have not been able to spot patterns or trends in pupils leaving the school. For example, leaders were unaware that the majority of those that opted to be home educated were disadvantaged pupils.

Pastoral care remains a strength of the school. Staff know pupils well and pupils trust their teachers. Relationships are respectful throughout the school. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and are keen to be successful. The school's work to inform pupils of the options for their next steps in education is excellent. Pupils benefit hugely from a wide range of career advice and guidance which helps them to make informed choices.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all staff are aware of their responsibility to be vigilant on safeguarding. There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Staff have regular and focused child protection training, paired with regular updates so that they are aware of pertinent issues, including local and new priorities, such as right-wing extremism. Consequently, staff fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities

effectively. Staff are clear about who to refer any concerns on to and leaders deal with referrals appropriately, drawing upon external agencies when the need arises. Pupils are and feel safe at school. Those who spoke to inspectors expressed a sound understanding of ways to keep themselves safe, including from online dangers. Pupils are confident that staff would deal effectively with any bullying, or other problems, they might experience. Pupils are very complimentary about the pastoral support that they receive when they need it.

## **Inspection findings**

- Since the headteacher took up post, leaders have worked relentlessly with other leaders to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes with varying success. In 2016, pupils' progress was weak. Overall, pupils made similar progress to those with the same starting points nationally in 2017. However, their progress in English, mathematics, science, EBacc subjects and humanities was significantly below the national averages. This was, in part, because of some staffing turbulence and weaker teaching. Leaders have evaluated the reasons for this and have very recently introduced improvement strategies to address underachievement. While there is clear evidence that the quality of teaching is improving, it is too soon to see an impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The school's historical curriculum included courses which did not prepare pupils well for their next steps, for example the ECDL course. This is because they had already covered similar content in other courses or because the qualification was not challenging enough for them. Leaders have introduced a new curriculum in which more pupils follow academic courses that better match their needs and aspirations. For example, leaders have recognised that pupils need to learn about how to manage their personal finances and to understand concepts, such as personal pay-day loans more fully. Consequently, all pupils in key stage 4 complete a personal finance course to enhance their understanding of this topic.
- The sixth form is growing in popularity. Consequently, more pupils choose to stay on and numbers are growing. Teaching in the sixth form is improving and students are very complimentary of the support they receive, both within lessons and pastorally. Students dress smartly and are polite and courteous. Outcomes in the sixth form are variable. Leaders' analysis of the available information lacks sharpness and rigour. As a result, their view of students' achievements is over-generous. Leaders of the sixth form do not routinely evaluate their performance or have targeted improvement plans, specific to the sixth form, in place. The whole-school self-evaluation procedures and improvement plans take limited account of the sixth form. As a result, leadership of the sixth form is not as sharp as elsewhere in the school.
- A significant proportion of pupils leave the school during the year, for example 32 pupils left in the school year 2016/17 and more than 18 did so in 2017/18. Leaders support these pupils well before they leave the school. Leaders liaise effectively with outside agencies when needed. However, record-keeping, identification of the threshold of when a pupil is eligible for a managed move and basic analysis of those pupils leaving the school roll to be home educated are ineffective or non-existent. Leaders are, therefore, not able to spot any trends or

patterns in the pupil groups that leave the school before the end of their education. For example, leaders were not aware that the majority of those pupils whose parents and carers had chosen to educate them at home were disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders were unable to report to other leaders and the governing body that there is a clear pattern. Equally, leaders did not recognise the emerging trend that more pupils from key stage 3 left the school roll in 2017/18 than in the previous year, including pupils now being educated at home.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement strategies are embedded fully and then evaluated effectively to measure their impact on raising pupils' outcomes
- routine analysis takes place of those pupils who leave the school so that leaders can easily spot patterns and/or trends and report the findings to the governing body
- teachers address weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy skills and embed effective strategies across the curriculum, leading to better outcomes for pupils
- self-evaluation and improvement plans for the sixth form are appropriately targeted, sufficiently detailed and focused on raising students' achievements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bianka Zemke  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, members of the senior leadership team and two governors, including the chair and trust representative. They met informally with pupils and sixth formers. Inspectors visited several classes with senior leaders, and spoke with pupils about their work. Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding and child protection records, external review documents and achievement information. Parents' views were considered through the 143 responses to Parent View. There were no responses from staff or pupils to consider from their respective online inspection questionnaires.