

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 October 2018

Mrs Karen Bennett
Headteacher
Will Adams Centre
Woodlands Road
Gillingham
Kent
ME7 2BX

Dear Mrs Bennett

Short inspection of Will Adams Centre

Following my visit to the school on 25 September 2018 with Andrew Hogarth, 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, ably supported by your senior leadership team, guide the school with ambitious and effective determination for all pupils to do well. You have a strong vision for pupils to leave the school well equipped for a potential future successful life. Staff and members of the management committee share your aspiration for all pupils to achieve of their best. All staff who responded to the staff survey said that they are proud to work at the school. You know what is working well in the school and where things could be even better.

Leaders and staff know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils and parents are full of praise for the support provided by staff. A parent explained that there are 'clear channels of communication' between home and school. Parents appreciate the way that staff readily celebrate pupils' success or share concerns, when needed. Pupils value the positive and respectful relationships that they have with staff.

You and your team successfully promote pupils' positive behaviour. Classrooms are consistently calm and focused on learning. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They complete their tasks with purpose and move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils explained that being given a 'fresh start every day' motivates them to behave well. Consequently, the school is a happy, productive learning environment.

At the time of the previous inspection you were asked to improve the quality of

teaching by raising pupils' aspirations and also to improve the quality of writing. The school's motto 'dream, believe, achieve' is clear in pupils' high expectations of themselves. Pupils know that staff want them to do well. Teachers and support staff effectively challenge pupils to improve in their learning, behaviour and attendance. Pupils confidently told inspectors about their future plans for education and work. However, for disadvantaged pupils, the use of additional funding is not yet focused sharply enough on their specific needs, to enable them to achieve even better outcomes. You also accurately identified that you needed to redesign the curriculum to prepare pupils better for their transition to college. This work is ongoing.

You are also successfully improving the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils enjoy writing for many different purposes across a range of subjects. For example, pupils write to express their ideas in art, or to make comparisons in personal and social education. Teachers adeptly support pupils to improve their writing, for example by encouraging pupils to use increasingly complex vocabulary. Pupils take great pride in their work and most work seen in pupils' books is well presented. You are ambitious for further improvements in pupils' writing and this remains one of your priorities for the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that checks on staff are completed thoroughly before they start employment. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know how to report any concerns. Leaders respond swiftly and work closely with parents and other agencies. Records are diligently maintained, and referrals tenaciously followed up when needed. Policies and procedures are currently being updated to reflect the most recent government guidance.

You and your staff successfully promote pupils' well-being. For example, pupils are taught well about online safety and the dangers of smoking. Pupils know that staff want to support them and feel confident to talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns. The management committee, too, play their part effectively, for example by undertaking safer recruitment training to ensure that they are knowledgeable to carry out their responsibilities thoroughly. Members of the management committee visit the school regularly, for example to check the recruitment records.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of leaders' work to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well, how effectively pupils are supported to make a successful transition when leaving the school and how well leaders ensure that pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Well-structured additional support enables most disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. Extra help is successfully improving pupils' personal development and welfare as well as their learning. A positive impact of this can be seen in the improved attendance rates for individual pupils. Overall the outcomes achieved

by disadvantaged pupils are broadly similar to others in the school. However, the use of additional funding is not yet focused sharply enough on supporting these specific pupils' needs so that they achieve even better outcomes.

- Highly effective induction and transition programmes are used to help pupils when they join or leave the school. As a result, the pupils who arrive at different points throughout the year settle exceptionally quickly. Across the school, pupils are well supported to plan their move on to college or apprenticeships. A helpful programme of college visits successfully broadens pupils' awareness of possible course options open to them. Recent, well-conceived curriculum changes are helpfully designed to prepare pupils better for their move to college. As a result, pupils are now studying a wider range of GCSE courses than previously, focused on meeting college entry requirements and preparing them for employment. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these recent developments and this work rightly remains a priority for the school.
- Leaders and teachers keep a close watch on pupils' progress. Consequently, the right additional support and challenge is provided when needed. Teachers' skilful questioning enables them to check pupils' understanding and clarify any misconceptions before moving their learning on. For example, in creative media pupils were adeptly supported to discuss stereotyping and understand the subtleties of persuasive advertising. Teachers successfully motivate pupils to want to improve their work. As a result, from often low starting points, most pupils make strong progress in their learning across the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they sharpen their focus on the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, aiming for these pupils to achieve even better outcomes
- they continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that pupils are well equipped to make a successful transition in their education or to gain employment.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Prince
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and senior leaders. The lead inspector spoke to members of the management committee and also had a discussion with representatives from the local authority. Together, and with senior leaders, we visited classes in all year

groups. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, inspectors considered the 14 responses from a recent school parent survey and spoke to a small number of parents. There were 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, which were considered. Inspectors met with a group of pupils, talked informally to pupils about their learning and scrutinised work in pupils' books. There were no responses to the online pupil survey, but the 18 responses from a recent school pupil survey were considered. We analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about safeguarding. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness.