

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 October 2018

Ms Hughes-Williams
Principal
Heart of England School
Gypsy Lane
Balsall Common
Coventry
West Midlands
CV7 7FW

Dear Ms Hughes-Williams

Short inspection of Heart of England School

Following my visit to the school on 9 October 2018 with Clare Considine and Richard Gill, 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 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 and the senior team offer clear and principled leadership. This is rooted in a belief that what happens in the classroom makes all the difference. The previous inspection concluded that leaders should improve the ability of teachers to meet pupils' individual learning needs better. An effective classroom-based staff training programme is praised by middle leaders. This research-based training has ensured that, for the most part, teaching is now more attuned to the needs of pupils. Leaders expect teachers to know their pupils well, and they do.

The overwhelming majority of staff and parents feel the school is well led. You and your senior team uphold a clear set of values, which underpins all that you do. These values of honesty, courage, determination, humour and kindness feature in displays around the school. Staff refer to them when talking about their work. Pupils know the school's values and why they are important.

Overall outcomes at the school, as measured by pupil progress in their best eight subjects at GCSE, are improving. Recent performance data for 2018 shows that pupils of all abilities made more progress than previously. Pupils' attainment is above the national average. This includes the proportion of pupils gaining a strong and standard pass in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualification.

Leaders' self-evaluation is increasingly accurate. Disadvantaged pupils are making improved progress, but it is still not enough. While teaching in mathematics is improving, it is too early to see an impact on GCSE outcomes.

Pupils are an asset to the school. They are polite, friendly and smart in appearance. Relationships between pupils and with staff are strong. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors and speak positively about all aspects of their school. Pupils' good attitudes are reflected in classrooms. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Work is generally well structured to meet pupils' needs. Pupils can explain how previous work has prepared them for what they are currently studying. This was particularly the case in modern foreign languages, science and history.

Governance is strong. Governors know the school well. They highlight successes and are ambitious for improvement. The members of the governing board bring a wide range of skills and experience to their role. They have confidence in the leadership team and are clear about the areas where performance is not yet at the level they require. Governors set a clear vision. They hold leaders to account and take their responsibility for the prudent use of public money very seriously.

The majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were pleased with the work of the school. A number of parents noted the care provided, and one parent wrote of a focus on 'the whole child'.

Safeguarding is effective.

This area of the school is well led. Checks to ensure that staff are safe to work at the school are thorough, and all governors are trained in safer recruitment practices. Staff receive all necessary training. They are knowledgeable about signs to look for, in terms of pupils needing extra support, and how to share any potential concerns with colleagues. All staff who replied to Ofsted's staff questionnaire report that the school is safe.

All documentation is stored securely, and liaison with external agencies is effective. Leaders are fully aware of potential safeguarding concerns in the local area. Leaders are well trained and vigilant. They know their work to keep pupils safe is ongoing and ever changing.

Pupils feel safe in school. They say that there are no areas in the school that they would not visit, and they feel year groups mix together well. They explained to inspectors how they are taught about healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe in relationships. Inspectors observed an effective assembly about online safety.

Inspection findings

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, although improving, is not yet good enough. You are addressing the barriers to these pupils making progress. These include problems around transport, uniform and access to revision guides. Staff liaise

closely with parents. The vice-principal conducts regular reviews on these groups of pupils and how they are meeting the standards expected of them. Inspection evidence shows that the performance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is better in English than in mathematics. However, the initiatives that leaders have put in place to improve progress for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are not evaluated in sufficient detail.

- Outcomes in mathematics have not been as good as in English. Challenges in recruiting mathematics teachers over the past three years have led to weaker outcomes. Staffing in mathematics is now more settled, and this is leading to current pupils making stronger gains in their learning. At present, this is more marked at key stage 3, where there is less of a legacy of weaker teaching. The culture of aspiration seen in the English department is now developing in the mathematics department as a sense of teamwork develops among the staff.
- The sixth form continues to be a strength of the school. In 2017, both boys and girls made above-average progress at A level. Attainment in 2018 largely matches that of 2017, and leaders predict similarly strong progress. School data and work seen in classes indicate current students are making good progress. Students benefit from wide-ranging and effective pastoral support. They are taught how to keep safe and are presented with appropriate careers options. The head of sixth form prepares students well for their futures beyond the school.
- While attendance, overall, is in line with the national average, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has been lower over time. Moreover, the rate of exclusion of these pupils has been higher than their peers. Leaders have addressed these issues, including through effective work by pastoral support managers. They follow up absences quickly and work with families to improve pupil attendance. The school's code of conduct is understood by pupils. Pupils spoken to on inspection say that there are members of staff they can approach if they have problems and that these will be dealt with. A well-resourced area of the school is available for pupils requiring extra support. Inspectors saw pupils socialising and working well in this space. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving and the rates of exclusion for these pupils are much reduced.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they sharpen their analysis of the effectiveness of interventions to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
- the teaching of mathematics continues to improve so that more pupils make the progress they are capable of in this subject.

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

Yours sincerely

Nigel Griffiths
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team met with you, your senior team, middle leaders and representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority, who is also the school improvement partner. Accompanied by leaders, we visited an assembly and lessons. We spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their books. We also met with pupils informally at social times. We discussed safeguarding practices, records and policies. We also reviewed recent performance data, plans for the curriculum and pupils' current progress, attendance and behaviour. I reviewed 55 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and the 123 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 119 responses that parents submitted to the free-text service, and the 73 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.