

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Gail Brindley
Head of School
Two Rivers High School
Torc Campus
Silver Link Road
Glascote Heath
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B77 2HJ

Dear Miss Brindley

Short inspection of Two Rivers High School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019 with Jane Edgerton, 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 outstanding in December 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Leaders have built on the strengths identified in the previous inspection report and have taken effective action to make further improvements.

You, leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of the school's effectiveness. You closely monitor the quality of provision by closely analysing a range of information. Leaders consistently focus on the impact of their actions to develop all aspects of the school.

Pupils are taught well, and they have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils in every year group make strong progress and move on to appropriate destinations when they leave the school. Staff help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by developing pupils' social skills and encouraging them to become as independent as possible.

Strengths in teaching that were identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Staff plan activities thoughtfully and have high expectations of all pupils. However, there are some aspects of practice that are not fully developed. At times, misunderstandings of mathematical concepts are not addressed promptly, and pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at

length. Some pupils make too many spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in their work.

Most pupils attend regularly and behave very well. Staff help those pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour to improve their conduct. As a result of higher expectations, changes that leaders made to the school day and additional staff training, incidents of inappropriate behaviour are declining.

Leaders and staff work more closely with parents than at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, most parents feel listened to. Parents are provided with opportunities to share any concerns that they may have, and staff take time to explain why the school is suggesting a particular course of action. Parents are given information about how they can help their child further and support their learning at home. Parental engagement is now a strength of the school.

Governance is highly effective because governors offer strong support and challenge to leaders. They have an accurate understanding of the qualities of the school, and they use their knowledge, skills and experience to hold leaders to account. Governors are highly ambitious for the school, and they are passionate about improving the life chances of young people.

Governors carry out their statutory duties efficiently and ensure that resources are well managed, that additional funding is used effectively and that safeguarding procedures are robust.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. This aspect of the school's work is well led and there is a strong culture of keeping children safe embedded throughout the school.

All staff are well trained and are kept up to date about safeguarding matters. Processes for reporting issues are clear and known by staff. Referrals are timely, and appropriate action is taken if required. Leaders and staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities, and they follow up concerns tenaciously.

Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils, and pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils learn about personal safety, healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. Pupils, staff and parents who made their views known during the inspection believe that pupils are safe.

Record-keeping is systematic, and information is stored securely. Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors, and the maintenance of the single central record of recruitment meets requirements.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They make substantial academic progress and develop the characteristics of successful learners.
- Pupils take part in a range of work-related learning activities. For example, they volunteer to support younger pupils and participate in work experience both in school and with external organisations. Staff help pupils to develop their resilience, and many pupils can travel to different places independently. As a result of this provision, and effective careers education, almost all pupils move on to places that they sustain in education, training or employment.
- Teaching is highly effective. Staff plan activities that help pupils to develop their independence and make considerable progress from their different starting points. Staff use questions and resources well to deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils work well with each other and staff. Positive and productive relationships help pupils to make sustained progress.
- Occasionally, teaching has less impact. In these instances, misunderstandings of mathematical concepts are not addressed quickly, and expectations of pupils' accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar are not high enough. Pupils are not consistently given opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff use de-escalation strategies and 'emotional coaching' to help pupils to manage their own behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection and the use of fixed-term exclusions has declined considerably. No pupils have been excluded from school this academic year.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and most are rarely absent. Attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now close to the national average for all secondary schools. Staff continue to work productively with families and outside agencies to reduce absence rates.
- Staff work well with parents. They communicate with parents through regular newsletters, phone calls, text messages, meetings and conversations at the start and end of the school day. Annual reviews are now more personalised and involve the individual pupil's form tutor. Coffee mornings and parental 'workshops', covering topics such as communication, safeguarding and therapies, have also helped to increase parental satisfaction.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that more opportunities are provided for staff to share best practice in:

- rectifying misconceptions in mathematics promptly
- ensuring that pupils write accurately and at length in a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. I considered six responses to the staff questionnaire. I had a meeting with four members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. Short visits were made to 14 lessons with the executive headteacher and you. We spoke to pupils formally and informally and observed behaviour in classrooms and during social time. We considered 83 responses to the school's parental satisfaction survey and seven free-text comments made by parents on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and I looked at published information on the school's website.