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Mrs Joanne Lowe
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Dear Mrs Lowe

Short inspection of The Kingsway School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2019 with Jane Holmes, Ofsted inspector, and Colin Bell, 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 April 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.**

Since the last inspection you have led the school through the process of becoming an academy. You have built your leadership team and now feel that you have leaders in the right areas to drive the school forward. You have introduced new policies and procedures to improve provision for pupils. However, many of these new policies have not had time to make an impact, for example the teaching and learning policy.

You have created a calm and welcoming environment. Pupils are well behaved and respectful to each other and adults in the school. They typically demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and value the help and support of their teachers. Most pupils are attentive learners and try hard for their teachers. However, there are a small number of pupils who do not engage fully with their learning. While these pupils do not disrupt the learning of others, they remain passive in the classroom and do not participate sufficiently in the activities set.

The published GCSE information for 2018 shows that pupils make progress that is broadly in line with the national average. Their GCSE attainment is slightly higher than the national average. However, this is not true for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils make significantly less progress than other pupils. You are aware of this, and

the progress of disadvantaged pupils is a key focus for the school. Nonetheless, the gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally is showing little sign of improvement.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They say that their children are safe and well looked after. Parents value the help and support that your staff give to their children so that they make sound progress. They say that they are particularly happy with the pastoral care their children receive. Staff are proud to work in the school. They say that the pupils are well behaved and learn well. They feel that pupils are safe.

Governors are very proud of the school. They understand the strengths of the school and talk knowledgably about the areas for development. They bring a range of skills, particularly in the education sector, to the governance of the school. Their expertise allows them to offer you support, but also to provide challenge where necessary.

I was interested in seeing the impact you have had on improving teaching and learning, as this was an area for improvement from the last inspection. Since the last inspection, you have made several changes to the leadership of teaching and learning, but there is little evidence of any impact to date. While there is some strong teaching practice, it has not been shared effectively across the curriculum. Consequently, some teaching does not meet the needs of the pupils.

Safeguarding is effective

You have created a culture of safeguarding across the school. Regular annual training ensures that staff understand the key issues that face pupils and know what to do when a pupil needs help.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They talked enthusiastically with inspectors about the two weeks each year that are dedicated to providing information which helps them to do this. Pupils say that some bullying does happen, but that teachers typically deal with it well when it occurs.

You have put effective measures in place to ensure that pupils can walk safely between the two sites.

Inspection findings

- The inspection was based around several lines of enquiry. The first was to see how well the quality of education now meets the needs of the pupils and how effectively leaders ensure that good teaching practice is shared across all staff. Pupils learn well and are engaged in their learning when teachers' accurate planning ensures that work is well matched to their needs and abilities. However, there are some instances where learning activities are either too easy or too difficult for some pupils. Historical changes to the leadership of teaching and learning have not led to enough improvement in teaching over time. While

teachers now have opportunities to share good practice, this has not been in place long enough to bring about the necessary improvements.

- I was interested in how you are working to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You have recently introduced individual pupil trackers for disadvantaged pupils. These trackers identify the barriers that prevent these pupils from making better progress. As these have only recently been introduced, it is too soon to see any positive effects of this strategy. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is low and has not improved over time. The information provided by leaders shows limited improvement in the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently on roll. Thus, the progress of disadvantaged pupils remains a concern.
- I was also interested in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Although overall school attendance is in line with the national average, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is much lower. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school is high. You have increased the number of staff in the pastoral team to ensure that attendance is closely monitored. As a result, communication with parents has improved and there has been a small improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils this year.
- My final line of enquiry concerned how appropriately leaders use permanent exclusions. This was because permanent exclusions have been well above the national average in the past. You and the staff have introduced many supportive measures to help pupils who have difficulty moderating their own behaviour. As a result, permanent exclusions have reduced considerably and are now in line with the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning improves by:
 - using assessment effectively to match teaching to pupils' needs
 - sharing the good practice currently within the school across all departments
- they overcome the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils so that their progress moves closer to that of other pupils nationally
- they build on recent improvements so that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils increases to in line with that of all pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Erica Sharman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, information on pupils' performance and attendance and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.

Inspectors met with you and other members of your leadership team. I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.

Jointly with school leaders, inspectors observed learning in several subject areas and looked at work in pupils' books. Together with senior leaders, we also examined the work across a range of subjects of a group of current pupils. We spoke formally and informally to groups of pupils from all year groups. We observed pupils' behaviour both in lessons and during social times.

We reviewed the 97 responses to the pupils' survey and the 269 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We considered the 127 responses that parents submitted to the free-text service as well as the 105 responses to the staff questionnaire.