

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Stephen Powell  
Headteacher  
Nunnery Wood High School  
Spetchley Road  
Worcester  
Worcestershire  
WR5 2LT

Dear Mr Powell

### **Short inspection of Nunnery Wood High School**

Following my visit to the school on 29 March 2019 with Ofsted Inspectors Gwendoline Onyon and Huw Bishop, 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 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and the staff have created an ethos of excellence and ambition. Your highly effective leadership of the school prioritises caring for others. The school's enrichment programme reflects a strong spirit of selflessness, exemplified by pupils' fundraising work for charity. Together with school staff, pupils have raised substantial funds for a local hospice and for disabled children in Worcestershire. Senior pupils told inspectors that they have frequent opportunities to broaden their horizons and develop their confidence. For example, Year 11 pupils are encouraged to study AS level government and politics. In doing so, they have recently visited the Houses of Parliament and listened to a live debate in the House of Commons. Pupils have also attended a performance of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake produced by Matthew Bourne. One pupil said, 'It was wonderful to see the work of a great choreographer.'

You regularly celebrate pupils' success and self-improvement. For example, pupils who consistently achieve well in their lessons are praised publicly for their academic success in the school's monthly newspaper, 'Nunnery News'. Pupils are rightly proud

of this newspaper, which is published by them to a high standard. The newspaper serves as an excellent model of motivation and inspiration for the school community. For example, pupils who wrote newspaper articles in Year 7 are now members of the editorial team in Year 10. One pupil told inspectors, 'This experience is good for my future prospects.'

Parents and carers recognise your high aspirations and ambitions for their children. One parent was unequivocal in her support of the school, saying, 'Nunnery Wood High School is a wonderful school at the heart of Worcester, with excellent results and facilities.' Another said, 'Although it is a large school, they treat each child as an individual.'

You and the senior leaders are well supported by the school's governing body. The minutes of meetings are focused on school improvement to ensure that pupils receive the best quality of education. Governors ask very challenging questions of school leaders in their meetings. One governor told me that they take their responsibilities seriously, especially in holding senior leaders to account. They demonstrate that they know the school extremely well because of this high level of commitment.

You have addressed effectively the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. You were asked to improve the quality of teaching in order to improve pupils' achievement. You took time carefully to provide opportunities for teachers to work together to challenge, stimulate and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved significantly. For example, the proportions of pupils, of all abilities, attaining grade 5 or above in GCSE English and mathematics in 2018 were well above the national averages.

You were asked to strengthen the effectiveness of middle leaders' work so that all teaching is at least good. You introduced a strategy called 'Perfect Pitch', which encouraged all middle leaders to ensure that teachers planned lessons based on assessment data and pupils' individual needs. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and most pupils in all years, and across different subjects, make strong progress. The excellent achievement in the 2018 public examinations confirms this.

You were also asked to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and to reduce their rates of persistent absence. Pastoral leaders have been robust in their work to increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and reduce persistent absence. This has resulted in a significant reduction in persistent absenteeism, and disadvantaged pupils' overall attendance is now close to that of other pupils nationally.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Senior leaders and staff have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are accurate and regularly checked. Staff know who to refer concerns to and how this should be communicated. This is because the school

invests well in providing staff training so that all colleagues' safeguarding practice is up to date.

As a result, staff understand the responsibilities required to keep pupils safe. This is reinforced by the comprehensive safer recruitment checks that the school makes on all newly appointed staff.

Designated safeguarding staff respond promptly to any safeguarding issue raised. During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised how the school handled these concerns and concluded that they are investigated thoroughly, and that the school's safeguarding policy is followed assiduously.

Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe and well cared for at the school. Pupils' views about safeguarding are equally positive. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and that any unacceptable incidents are dealt with promptly and fairly.

## **Inspection findings**

- Published examination results for 2018 show that a small number of pupils completed the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) compared to other pupils nationally. This is because so few pupils study a modern foreign language in key stage 4. As a result of effective teaching, those who do so generally make very good progress.
- You have enhanced the curriculum offer for modern foreign languages by introducing Spanish alongside French and German at key stage 4. However, currently not enough pupils are studying a modern foreign language at key stage 4.
- Your determination to improve the quality of teaching has resulted in the next phase of development for middle leaders. Through a programme entitled 'Flexible Teaching', middle leaders develop collaborative approaches to planning that have led to subject teams beginning to tackle common barriers to achievement, such as improving boys' progress. The high-quality resources and lesson tasks produced by staff demonstrate evidence of effective middle leadership.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Staff have responded well to the school's professional development programme. As a result, you have eradicated weak teaching and there are now many examples of strong practice across the school. Pupils told inspectors that most teaching is very effective. Inspectors saw lessons where pupils were able to attempt challenging tasks because teachers introduced them in bite-sized chunks. When stuck, pupils were invited to peer-review their work. As one pupil said, 'This way, I hope not to make the same mistake twice.' These approaches have been of particular benefit to boys whose attainment, although better than the national average, is not as strong as that of the girls in the school.
- Finally, inspectors investigated pupils' behaviour in school. This is because historical data showed that the number of fixed-term exclusions was greater than the national average. The number of repeat exclusions had also been high. You

and the pastoral staff are managing pupils' behaviour consistently and effectively. Inspectors saw good behaviour management and high standards of pupil behaviour in lessons across the school and during social times. Consequently, the number of fixed-term and repeat exclusions has been significantly reduced.

- Staff set high expectations for behaviour, which pupils consistently meet. Pupils are polite, courteous, self-assured and resilient. Their attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Relationships between teachers and pupils are also very good.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further review and develop the school's approach to raising the achievement of boys
- they continue to develop and embed successful strategies to increase the proportion of pupils entered for modern foreign languages at key stage 4 and, consequently, for the EBacc.

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

Yours sincerely

Antony Edkins  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. We visited several classes with you or with other senior leaders, where we observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils about their work. We talked with pupils at breaktime. I met with the chair and vice-chair of governors and a recently appointed governor. We scrutinised several documents, including your self-evaluation of the school's performance, safeguarding information and the school's development plan. We considered 148 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 140 free-text responses. We considered 79 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 71 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.