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2 July 2019

Mrs Maria Williams  
Headteacher  
Brigshaw High School  
Brigshaw Lane  
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Dear Mrs Williams

### **Short inspection of Brigshaw High School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2019 with Garry Stout and Tricia Stevens, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2018, you have built on the existing strengths at the school, but quickly identified those areas that need to improve further. You and your deputy headteacher provide highly effective leadership. Your self-evaluation is precise and insightful. As a result, school improvement planning focuses clearly on areas that most need to improve.

You lead by example. You are supported ably by other leaders and, together, you are all highly ambitious for staff and pupils. Your leadership has galvanised the school and, consequently, the trajectory of improvement is gathering momentum, particularly with regard to disadvantaged pupils' progress, learning and attendance. You and other leaders are resolutely committed and determined to embed a 'culture of excellence' across the school. However, you and other leaders are not complacent and recognise that there is still work to be done to sustain these recent improvements.

Your caring and inclusive ethos permeates the school. A culture of respect is promoted with staff and pupils. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were eager to tell inspectors how proud they are of their school and how they appreciate the recent changes. Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong. These strong, positive attitudes provide them with a solid foundation so that they actively participate in and support their peers with their learning. When teachers' expectations are high,

pupils rise to the challenge and make strong gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, you and other leaders recognise that there are instances when expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and, therefore, they are not challenged sufficiently to think hard or deep about a concept or idea. Nonetheless, you have implemented systems and processes so that teachers can be provided with appropriate support and training and, where necessary, pupils can access additional intervention.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They provide effective challenge and support to you and other leaders. Like you and other leaders, they are realistic and reflective. Governors and trustees have a wide range of skills and expertise and use them wisely to hold leaders regularly and robustly to account for the progress and attainment of pupils. For example, they check and review the spending of the pupil premium funding and additional funding for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They know what is working and what is not. As a group, they are extremely effective in their roles.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and other leaders, supported by staff, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have ensured that procedures are clear, and staff are clear about their responsibilities. The training that staff receive allows them to identify any early signs that indicate they need to intervene and get help for pupils potentially at risk of harm. You work with some of the most vulnerable pupils in the school on an individual basis to ensure that their specific needs are met.

The planned curriculum provides pupils with a variety of opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves and others safe. Although some pupils, parents and carers raised concerns regarding bullying, there was no evidence of this during the inspection and most pupils spoken to informed inspectors that they know who to approach if they have any worries, and that they were confident that any issue would be dealt with quickly and in an appropriate way.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, a key line of enquiry inspectors focused on was around how leaders' actions were contributing to improvements in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. This was particularly so taking into account the historical underachievement of disadvantaged pupils at the school. In December 2018, leaders commissioned an external review of how the pupil premium funding was being spent and to what effect. As a result, leaders amended and adapted improvement planning.
- Leaders' sharp focus on what need to be done to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment is bearing fruit. For example, leaders and staff have an insightful understanding of the barriers some pupils face and, therefore, in the main, learning activities are planned to meet disadvantaged pupils' needs. Teachers' planning takes into account pupils' subject-specific gaps. Teachers' movement in the classroom, largely, provides disadvantaged pupils with support

so they can catch up in a timely manner. Consequently, observations of learning and work in current disadvantaged pupils' books indicate that they are making better progress across a range of subjects, particularly so in English and mathematics.

- The achievement of pupils with SEND was also an area of focus during this inspection, because progress by the end of key stage 4 for these pupils has been, historically, too variable. Pupils who require additional support are tracked and monitored effectively. Therefore, leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the challenges pupils face. Appropriately deployed support is benefiting current pupils, especially pupils in Year 7, who are demonstrating rapid improvements in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who need additional help with their reading are accessing appropriate programmes of support. As a result, some pupils have made significant gains in their chronological reading ages from their lower than average starting points.
- Inspectors also focused closely on the quality of the sixth-form provision at the school. Sixth-form leadership is a strength of the school and, consequently, the sixth form is good. Leaders monitor students' progress carefully and offer tailored guidance and support where appropriate. As a result, students' outcomes are demonstrating signs of improvement.
- Students in this phase of the school are positive, caring and respectful. Students feel part of a community. They benefit from appropriate careers support, advice and guidance. As a result, most students progress to their first-choice university and a number of students access high-quality apprenticeships.
- Inspectors evaluated leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those whose first language is not English. Rates of absence and persistent absence have fallen for all groups of pupils. Leaders work very closely with staff to track pupils' attendance. They have clear systems and processes in place. This allows them to target individual pupils and initiate more personalised approaches to support pupils' needs. As a result, attendance is steadily improving and pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are attending school more frequently than previously. However, despite these improvements, leaders recognise that some disadvantaged pupils continue to not attend as regularly as they should.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they maintain current improvements and continue to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress, learning and attendance
- they continue to embed the culture of high expectations for all pupils across the school, especially ensuring that pupils are consistently challenged at a sufficient level in their learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the

director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Darren Stewart  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspectors held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders and a group of staff. Inspectors also met with a group of governors. The inspection team observed pupils' learning in different subjects. Most of this learning was observed jointly with you or other senior leaders. During the inspection, Year 12 were attending a UCAS conference. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school site during movement, breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke with pupils informally and met formally with four groups of pupils from the main school and a group of students from the sixth form. In addition, inspectors completed various, detailed work scrutinies to gauge current pupils' learning and progress over time. Inspectors considered a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, behaviour and attendance, pupil premium and teaching and learning.

Inspectors also considered the views of 170 parents given on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 90 free-text responses. Inspectors also took into account the 94 staff responses and 304 pupil responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires.