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Jodie Bolter
Principal
Tudor Grange Academy Redditch
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Dear Mrs Bolter

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tudor Grange Academy Redditch

Following my visit with Gwen Onyon, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 9 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- accelerate the development of the Year 9 curriculum, so that it matches the ambition of the national curriculum in all subjects.

Context

COVID-19 affected leaders' work to improve the curriculum for Year 9 pupils. However, heads of department have continued to improve subject curricula during this time. The pandemic has affected pupils' attendance. This is because some pupils with autism spectrum disorder have needed additional support to return to school.

There have been several changes in staffing and leadership since the inspection in June 2018. Aside from the head of school and you as principal, all other members of the leadership team have been appointed since. In addition, new leaders of English and science have been appointed.

Following the inspection in June 2018, a consultation took place on the age range of pupils taught at the school. Consequently, the school now provides education to pupils from Year 9 to Year 13. A small number of pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are educated at the specialist on-site resource base for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

Main findings

You want the very best for the pupils at Tudor Grange Academy Redditch. Staff share your ambition. They enjoy working at the school and those surveyed say it is improving. Leaders have made tangible and sustainable changes. These address many of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. Staff are not complacent. All continue to strive to improve further.

Subject leaders have worked to improve the quality of subject plans. They have considered the important knowledge, referred to as the 'fundamentals', that pupils need to know and remember. Leaders recognised that pupils could not always see how new learning built on what they had learned before. To address this, leaders introduced 'How, what and why' tasks. These help pupils make links in their learning.

In response to the pandemic, leaders have reviewed the personal, social and health education curriculum. This has been amended and reordered. For instance, as all pupils have returned to school, there has been a focus on healthy relationships. Leaders' changes have been well thought through.

Leaders have made sure that pupils in Year 9 study a broad range of subjects. Since September 2020, pupils in Year 9 have followed a new transitional curriculum. As part of this, pupils make some choices about the subjects that they study. In the chosen subjects, plans build pupils' knowledge. This means they are well prepared for their examination courses, which begin in Year 10. This learning is supplemented by a programme of learning covering the range of other subjects. However, this

lacks depth. For instance, for pupils who have not chosen geography, most learning centres on learning the location of places. Pupils do not deepen their understanding of human and physical processes. Pupils' opportunities to study design and technology, music and computing are also limited. As a result, the curriculum in Year 9 does not fully match the ambition of the national curriculum. Leaders are already addressing this. They are identifying the prior knowledge that pupils arrive with in Year 9. They plan to use this information to ensure the curriculum helps pupils build on what they already know. COVID-19 has slowed these plans, but they are still progressing.

Leaders continue to focus on staff training. There is a culture of improvement within subjects. Staff use dedicated time wisely to discuss the curriculum and how best to implement this in lessons. For instance, in mathematics, teachers have worked together so that practice questions improve pupils' fluency and understanding. This willingness to share ideas and improve together is a strength that benefits pupils' learning.

Leaders' work in reducing low-level disruption has been effective. Staff expect pupils to behave well. They remind pupils regularly of their expectations. Pupils know and understand these. Most staff apply the school behaviour policy consistently. Leaders check behaviour carefully and provide appropriate support when needed. As a result, the school is calmer and more orderly, and pupils can learn in lessons.

Leaders have been relentless in their determination to improve the sixth form. The range of courses on offer is extensive. Alongside this, leaders have developed the curriculum for students outside of taught lessons. This means that students have greater opportunity to develop their wider skills and interests. Students reflect leaders' high aspirations.

The specialist on-site resource base for pupils with autism spectrum disorder supports pupils well. Staff understood that some pupils will have been affected by the disruption to routines caused by the pandemic. They have worked sensitively with pupils to help overcome any anxieties. This has helped pupils to return to school successfully. It is indicative of the high-quality support that pupils receive.

The school improvement plan focuses on the right things. It shows how leaders are continuing to address the priorities identified at the last inspection. In addition, it sets out actions that, if implemented effectively, will continue to improve the quality of education.

Trustees and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They visit the school on a regular basis to check what leaders are telling them. They do this through a range of activities such as pupil discussions and learning walks. This gives them further insight, which they use to challenge and support leaders well.

Additional support

Multi-academy trust leaders are equally resolute in their ambition for pupils. Leaders at all levels have been quick to draw on the expertise from across the multi-academy trust. For instance, there is a strong network of curriculum leaders that work closely together. This has enhanced the quality of curriculum plans. Leaders use this support well. It has strengthened their ability to keep making the necessary improvements.

Evidence

During the inspection, we held meetings with the principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and teaching staff. We also met with the multi-academy trust chief executive officer and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I examined the school's single central register of background checks on adults working in the school. I reviewed the school's improvement plan and the school's own evaluation of its work. We scrutinised curriculum plans, visited lessons and spoke to pupils. An inspector also visited the specialist on-site resource base for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. I evaluated responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 12 free-text responses, and 34 questionnaires for staff.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Tudor Grange Academies multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector