

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 December 2022

Mrs Sophie Clark
Acting Headteacher
Weald of Kent Grammar School
Tudeley Lane
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 2JP

Dear Mrs Clark

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Weald of Kent Grammar School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 9 November 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspection.

I was accompanied by Louise Walker, His Majesty's Inspector, and Michael Boddington, Stuart Edwards, Julia Mortimore and Andrew Platt, Ofsted Inspectors. During the inspection, we discussed with you and other senior leaders, staff and trustees the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. I also evaluated the school's improvement plan. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The inspection team visited lessons to observe learning, met with groups of pupils and staff, and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. We have considered all this in coming to our judgement.

Weald of Kent Grammar School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school since the last section 5 inspection. You were appointed as acting headteacher in July 2022. A new chair of the board of trustees was elected in October 2022. You have also appointed heads of year at both school sites.

You, your leadership team and trustees have taken decisive action to ensure that the school improves towards becoming good in all areas. Importantly, you are committed to making sure that the views of staff, parents and pupils are thoroughly considered in this journey. You have carefully designed the strategic plan for improvement and ensure that leaders monitor and evaluate actions closely. You have also set measurable targets to reflect the intended impact of ongoing work around the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection.

Trustees are beginning to hold leaders to account more effectively. For instance, they are checking more rigorously on the impact of leaders' actions. Trustees also visit school to gather first-hand information. They use these visits to speak to leaders and staff about the school's work. Trustees are also making themselves more available to staff and more visible at school events.

Staff benefit from the training that you and your leadership team provide. Training for teachers is focused currently on ways to check pupils' understanding more effectively. Support staff are provided with training on how to support pupils in different subjects. Staff now view support and training more positively. They report that leaders are promoting a more open and transparent atmosphere. However, much of the work in this area is in the early stages.

Staff particularly appreciate that their welfare and well-being is a high priority for leaders. As one said, 'There is focus and clarity around where leaders are taking the school. They are working hard and listening to us.' You are also improving communication with parents. For example, you now provide information evenings where leaders outline changes in school policies.

Not all pupils feel confident in speaking to staff about bullying or friendship issues. You have introduced initiatives to ensure that pupils are more aware of the avenues of support open to them. For example, you have introduced 'peer mentors'. Older pupils act as peer mentors in Year 7 tutor groups, advising pupils on the best courses of action if they have any worries or concerns. Younger pupils are more aware of how to access student services and the adults they should approach if they need help. However, older pupils remain less confident about how effectively adults deal with incidents of bullying.

You have consulted staff and pupils and are currently refining the school's behaviour policy. At the start of the year you reinforced behaviour expectations with staff and pupils in assemblies and form tutor sessions. Some pupils feel that this helped to make staff's expectations more consistent. However, other pupils believe that there are still subjects where pupils are not treated fairly.

External support is helping you and your leadership team to gain an objective view of the impact of the strategic improvement plan. You have also benefited from working with colleagues from a local school. You and your team now have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
His Majesty's Inspector