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Mrs Joanne Barton
Principal
Woodkirk Academy
Rein Road
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Dear Mrs Barton

Short inspection of Woodkirk Academy

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2017 with Michael Cook and Janet Gabanski, 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 the school was judged to be good in November 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 in 2015, you have reshaped your senior leadership team to provide a more effective model of leadership for your school. Through your passion for and commitment to continuous improvement, you have ensured that leadership at all levels is focused on the progress of pupils and, as a result, outcomes of pupils have improved since the last inspection. The strategically developed systems and processes you have put in place allow you and your senior leaders to correctly identify areas of the school that need improvement and to support and improve performance in those areas. The significantly improved performance information received by governors enables them to provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders. There is strong capacity in the school's leadership to achieve the improvements that you aspire to in order to become an outstanding school.

You and your team have tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report successfully. At the last inspection you were asked to improve the outcomes for pupils across Years 7 to 11, including disadvantaged pupils. You ensure that the progress of pupils is at the heart of what you and your staff do daily, and raised the profile of the importance of the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, has improved significantly.

At the last inspection you were also asked to improve further the quality of teaching for pupils between Years 7 to 11. You and your senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and have put in place effective monitoring systems and procedures to support further improvement. You and your senior leaders have established the vision of 'shaping young lives' through continuous development of your staff, who fully support you and share your passion and ambition.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Your designated safeguarding leader knows the pupils very well, and has made certain that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

The school has effective referral procedures and leaders take actions swiftly and monitor impact closely. The school's relationship and communication with external agencies is strong. This means that you share information effectively and in a timely way. Your safeguarding leader has ensured that staff receive appropriate training in child protection and you and your team ensure that you carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff who work with pupils.

Pupils say that bullying sometimes does happen, but when it does, teachers and leaders tackle it quickly. Pupils also report that they feel safe, know who to go to if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any problems. Pupils value the support they receive from staff.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved, including the progress of the disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, the progress of all pupils was above the national average and provisional examination information for 2017 indicates that progress has improved even further to well above the national average. You and your team have ensured that extensive, thorough and detailed analysis of pupil performance provides you with accurate information about strengths and weaknesses in different subjects and different groups of pupils. As a result, you are able to target support effectively. The continuous improvement in the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the most able is evidence of the impact of your actions. You have correctly identified areas for further improvement and you are taking appropriate actions to reduce variation in outcomes across subjects.
- Your thorough monitoring systems show that the quality of teaching is good and improving. You have reviewed leadership at all levels and have named staff in each department as coordinators of teaching and learning. You and your leaders carry out frequent monitoring of the teaching and learning strategies and the impact on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. As a result, the majority of teachers provide more challenge for the most able and use questioning more effectively to probe understanding and support the progress of

pupils. During our joint visits to classrooms, we agreed that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' questioning and the quality of responses from pupils. From our joint scrutiny of pupils' work we could see that there is also variation in what teachers expect from pupils. You and your team have correctly identified subjects for further support and acknowledged that some successful strategies are not yet fully embedded. You recognise that there is still some work to do here to further improve consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.

- The attendance of pupils overall is improving year on year and is well above the national average. You and your leaders analyse extensively the attendance of all groups of pupils and know your pupils well. You have identified correctly that the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is a priority for the school. As a result, you have put in place a range of mechanisms to support these pupils to improve their attendance and you have had some success with one third of these pupils. You agreed with me that the work in this area needs to continue to ensure that the attendance of these pupils improves to be in line with the overall good attendance of pupils at the school. Exclusions for all pupils over time are reducing, including for the disadvantaged pupils. You have set high expectations for the behaviour of pupils, which staff consistently reinforce. Pupils are polite and they behave well in lessons and around school. The atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful. Relationships between staff and pupils in lessons are very positive and, as a result, pupils feel confident to ask questions and develop their learning further. You recently reviewed rewards across the school and introduced a new system following feedback from pupils. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the new rewards system.
- The progress students make in sixth form applied courses is strong and above national averages. The progress students make in academic courses is fluctuating but remains in line with national averages. Leaders of the sixth form have a comprehensive understanding of strengths and weaknesses and have taken appropriate actions to respond to the performance of the weaker academic courses. Teaching is strong in most subjects, with effective questioning and regular assessment and feedback. Attendance is high overall with no discernible differences between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. The students value the quality of education they receive and are very supportive of the sixth form. Almost all students gained entry to their first choice university in 2017.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to work on improving the attendance of groups of pupils, particularly pupils who are eligible for free school meals
- the good practice in teaching which exists in school is shared so that the quality of teaching continues to improve and is consistently good or better, including the quality of teachers' questioning and support
- they continue to reduce the variation in outcomes of pupils across subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior leaders, middle leaders and governors. I also met with you in your capacity as chief executive officer of Leodis Academies Trust. The inspectors met with a range of pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 and students from Years 12 and 13. Inspectors conducted tours of the school and lessons with senior leaders, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. The inspectors, alongside senior leaders, also conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects, including work produced in the sixth form.

The inspection team scrutinised and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, performance management and school improvement. Inspectors took account of the 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 75 extended responses from parents. They also took account of the 56 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 116 responses to the staff questionnaire.