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Nicola Shingleton  
Head of School  
Hadleigh High School  
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Ipswich  
Suffolk  
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Dear Mrs Shingleton,

### **Short inspection of Hadleigh High School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 January 2019 with Georgina Atkinson, Ofsted Inspector, 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 October 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils' outcomes overall at key stage 4 have remained strong and at least in line with national expectations. This is because leaders have continued to secure high standards of teaching in key subject areas.

The school has seen a significant number of changes since 2015. Leaders decided to set up the South Suffolk Learning Trust with three other local schools in July 2017. While this has been of undoubted benefit to the school, the initial period of transition was occasionally unsettling for some in the community. The senior leadership team has also undergone significant change, but there is now a shared vision for the school's future.

Following the departure of the previous headteacher last summer, an interim headteacher was appointed for the autumn term. During her short time in post she made a positive impact. She identified aspects of the school's provision that needed improvement and swiftly introduced effective measures to address them. You started in post only last week but benefited from working alongside her during this period and consequently you are in a good position to maintain the drive for further improvement. You shared your high expectations including your ambitious plans to redevelop the school's curriculum. You are well supported by a capable and versatile team of senior leaders, governors and staff who are proud to be members of the school community.

Senior leaders are striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils and the wider school community. They share a good grasp of the school's strengths and provided compelling evidence to show that actions they have implemented have been effective. They also have a thorough understanding of the areas that need to improve. Leaders are aware of the misgivings some parents have raised about aspects of teaching and learning including the challenge faced in recruiting permanent teachers to some subject areas. With the support of the trust, you have laid out clear plans to address these matters.

Teaching is strong across most subject areas, with particular strengths in English, modern foreign languages, science and geography. Typically, teachers make good use of a range of resources to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest. Their extensive subject knowledge and skilful use of questioning challenge pupils of all abilities and enable them to tackle new learning well. Leaders have created a culture that values the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Pupils said that they enjoy learning and know that they are making progress. Teachers said that they benefited from the training that leaders provide.

Leaders and governors are proud of the school's inclusive and welcoming ethos. In the words of one parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 'Hadleigh High School is a caring and nurturing learning environment.' These qualities were also a consistent theme in inspectors' conversations with pupils. The vibrant, informative displays in school corridors and social areas highlight pupils' achievements and the many opportunities they have to get involved in school life. They also serve to remind pupils of what is expected of them by reinforcing the school's values and fundamental British values, which include mutual respect and tolerance.

Leaders are aware that since the previous inspection standards of behaviour had begun to deteriorate. Low-level disruption had become relatively commonplace and some teachers did not apply the school's sanctions for misbehaviour consistently. Last term leaders introduced measures to address this. Pupils now behave well and build positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. They move calmly and confidently around the school and demonstrate exemplary conduct and attitudes to learning in most lessons.

The committed and experienced team of governors fulfil their responsibilities well and form valuable connections with the local community. They are passionate in their mission to make the school the best it can be and have become increasingly proficient in scrutinising the school's effectiveness. Over the past few months, they have supported the interim headteacher in securing significant improvements across the school. Governors continue to benefit from the financial and strategic support that the trust provides.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is a strong aspect of the school. Pupils' well-being is paramount and is supported by the considerable knowledge and experience of staff including the

designated safeguarding lead and other pastoral leaders. Pupils said that they feel safe and that they know who to talk to if they have any concerns.

All staff and governors have received up-to-date documentation and training. The checks carried out to make sure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are thorough and are recorded accurately on the school's single central register.

Inspectors' examination of documentation relating to pupils who are vulnerable shows that these records are stored securely with details of discussions and action taken. The school has forged strong partnerships with outside agencies including the local authority and children's services.

### **Inspection findings**

- I looked initially at the school's teaching and curriculum arrangements for disadvantaged pupils. This is because the progress of these pupils at key stage 4 has been below the national average for the past three years and dipped further in 2018. The interim headteacher appointed a senior leader to take responsibility for this key group of pupils. Teachers are now required each term to identify what steps they have taken to help disadvantaged pupils overcome any barriers to learning. As a result, senior leaders have a strong understanding of the actions that have had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils and what still needs to be done.
- The school operates on the principle of 'DP (disadvantaged pupils) first'. Teachers now prioritise the needs of these pupils by marking their work first and amending seating plans where necessary. Leaders plan conversations with disadvantaged pupils across key stage 3 to identify their specific needs as early as possible and to devise ways to meet them. This may, for example, mean ensuring that a pupil is able to go on a school visit or take part in one of the many extra-curricular activities on offer. Leaders also liaise closely with the families of these pupils to secure good working relationships.
- Inspection evidence confirms that pupils are benefiting from these changes alongside the good teaching they receive. In lessons and in their review of pupils' work, inspectors observed disadvantaged pupils making similar progress to other pupils across a range of subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics had been a concern at the previous inspection and I wanted to investigate how effectively leaders had addressed this.
- The school has appointed a new leader of mathematics who has brought fresh energy and enthusiasm to the teaching of the subject. Inspectors were able to confirm the evaluation of school leaders that the quality of teaching in mathematics has improved over the past term and is now typically strong. Pupils told inspectors that they now enjoy mathematics more and their interest in the subject continues to grow. This is because teachers plan lessons more effectively so that they provide challenge for pupils across the full ability range. Pupils' mastery of mathematical concepts is growing, and assessments are now better planned to test what they have learned. Although pupils are now making more

rapid progress in mathematics you would like outcomes to improve further.

- Last term, leaders recognised that some pupils in key stage 4 were making slow progress in mathematics. This was often because they were taught by more than one teacher or by teachers who lacked experience at this level. To ensure that this was no longer the case, leaders took the difficult decision to restructure the school timetable for the start of this term. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this change.
- A further line of enquiry was to evaluate the impact of the governors and trustees in securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. Those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of their separate roles and responsibilities and where overall accountability lies for the school's overall effectiveness. They have established positive working relationships with each other. The link trustee who sits on the local governing body helps to ensure that agreed actions are followed up and reviewed as a matter of course.
- The trust has also built capacity in the senior leadership team through the secondment of experienced headteachers to the school. The trust's chief executive officer acted as interim headteacher last year and sharpened the focus of senior leaders and governors in improving pupils' outcomes. Another headteacher from the trust is helping to bring increased rigour to the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Finally, we checked the school's plans to provide pupils with careers advice and guidance to ensure that they complied with the latest requirements. The careers programme is strong and well evaluated, and senior leaders could highlight a recent improvement in this area. For example, pupils in Year 8 have attended a local sixth-form college. Other education providers and employers have visited the school to talk with pupils in all years. All pupils in key stage 4 are entitled to a careers interview and disadvantaged pupils receive priority. As a result, most pupils understand what choices they can make in terms of the next steps in their education or training.
- Leaders understand the need to raise some pupils' aspirations and make them better aware of the full range of future education and employment opportunities. Pupils said that they would like to be better informed about financial planning including funding for their university education. Leaders are developing plans to address this by integrating careers information into the curriculum to highlight the links between subject areas and future employment.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they implement existing plans to improve the teaching of mathematics so that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, make more rapid progress
- they provide all leaders, including those who are new in post, with the necessary challenge, support and training to implement the school's improvement plan effectively.

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 Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Whear  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We met with you and other senior leaders to discuss progress since the previous inspection and to confirm the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I met with members of the local governing body and two trustees including the chair. An inspector spoke with a group of pupils to gain their views of the school.

We examined a variety of sources of information, including the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plans. We scrutinised the school's safeguarding, staff training and child protection procedures. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in a number of classes across both key stages. I also looked at 104 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 72 responses to the pupil survey and 44 staff survey returns.