

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Lee Gray
Headteacher
Studley High School
Crooks Lane
Studley
Warwickshire
B80 7QX

Dear Mr Gray

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Studley High School

Following my visit with Andrea Quigley, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 6 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the quality of leadership and management and its impact on outcomes, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other evidence relating to safeguarding. We carried out learning walks with senior leaders that involved visiting a wide range of lessons across subjects at both key stage 3 and key stage 4. We met with groups of pupils from each key stage. One inspector attended an assembly. We held discussions with a range of leaders, including the chair and members of the governing body. In these discussions we explored the performance of the school, with a focus on the impact of leadership and management on academic and pastoral outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school remains outstanding.

Context

The number of pupils on roll is just under 700. Almost 9% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and about 2% speak English as an additional language. The level of deprivation among pupils is below the national average and about 18% are eligible for free school meals. Just over 11% of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and of these about 1% have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan. Pupil stability is below the national average. This reflects the fact that pupils join the school in Years 7, 8 or 9, depending on which primary or middle school they attended, rather than because of high mobility rates among pupils. Eight children looked after attend the school. The school has a stable staff and does not encounter problems in recruiting or retaining staff.

Content

The last full inspection of the school was in November 2011, when it was judged to be outstanding. Since then, it has undergone significant changes in leadership, governance, curriculum, structures and systems. You joined the school in September 2014 and, since then, you have been instrumental in effecting these changes and ensuring that the quality of education provided remains outstanding.

Pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are in line with the national averages. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 11 is high and has been consistently well above the national average, indicating strong progress overall. Outcomes for the relatively small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very positive. However, this has not been the case for disadvantaged pupils, whose attainment and progress have been below those of other pupils in the school and nationally in the past.

The section 8 inspection in 2015 highlighted deficiencies in the evaluation of the use of pupil premium funding and its impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders responded promptly and very effectively to the recommendations made in the report of that visit. The school's pupil premium funding plan is now a cohesive and comprehensive strategy that addresses the needs of disadvantaged pupils in all aspects of their school experience. This includes not only their academic outcomes, but also their attendance, their behaviour, their self-confidence and the development of their skills. The strategy also addresses the quality of teaching they receive, the curriculum they experience, including the extra-curricular activities they access, and the extent to which their parents engage with the school. The strategy has been continually reviewed and revised to maximise the positive impact of actions on this group of pupils.

The positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, although not evident in the national performance tables for Year 11 pupils in 2016, is clearly evident in the school's own performance information for all year groups currently in the school. In

Years 10 and 11, differences in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school have diminished significantly. At key stage 3, there is a close correlation between the proportions of disadvantaged and of other pupils meeting their expected targets.

Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed the school's own evidence about the outstanding nature of teaching and learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their attitudes to learning. There is a very strong focus on ensuring that learning during lessons is productive and effective for all pupils. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' starting points, abilities and needs, and plan lessons to build on these and secure rapid rates of progress. Teaching assistants make high-quality contributions to teaching and learning. Pupils are very keen to learn. They have really excellent attitudes to learning and demonstrate high levels of respect for teachers and for other pupils in their lessons.

This is an inclusive and caring school. A well-established pastoral system and highly effective, personalised support processes are in place for all pupils who need it, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

Diligent tracking and monitoring of attendance and punctuality are in place. As a result, attendance has improved significantly for disadvantaged pupils, who are on track to meet the school's targets. Behaviour around the school is calm, purposeful and relaxed, and most pupils demonstrate high levels of self-discipline. The total number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions remains low. The school uses internal exclusion as a strategy to support any poor behaviour and this too remains low.

The school is an exciting, engaging and outward-looking place for staff and for pupils. You have encouraged a culture of high expectations, rigorous accountability, constant review and continual improvement. You and your senior leaders have a clear sense of direction and an unwavering desire to develop and further improve the school. Clear vision and direction drive the high standards of behaviour, achievement, appearance and attitude apparent among pupils.

The school's self-evaluation and the linked development plan indicate that leaders have a highly accurate view of the strengths of the school and of the areas it needs to prioritise to maintain and build on strengths.

There is a strong focus on succession planning and the development of middle and senior leaders. Leadership in mathematics is proactive and focused on ensuring that the quality of provision is outstanding. Pupils, regardless of their starting points and individual needs, have every opportunity to achieve as well as they are able and have high aspirations about their own capabilities. Relative weaknesses in performance in English in 2016 were quickly and effectively addressed. This resulted

in new leadership, thorough analyses of performance data, revisions to the curriculum, particularly in meeting the needs of boys, and revisions to teaching, assessment and interventions. All of this has energised the culture in the department and led to significant improvements in performance. As a result, differences between the performance of pupils in English and mathematics have been minimised, including for boys and for disadvantaged pupils.

The school's curriculum is a key factor in achieving the excellent outcomes of most pupils. It has been modified in the last two years to enable all pupils to achieve well at key stage 4. This involved a move from a relatively narrow academic offer to a broader curriculum that includes a range of technical, vocational and level 2 qualifications. The current Year 11 pupils are the first cohort to complete courses following the curriculum changes introduced since you took up post. School data about their performance indicates significant improvement. The curriculum is underpinned by strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that includes the consistent promotion of fundamental British values.

Governors provide strong support and a robust level of challenge for leaders. They have an excellent understanding of the priorities for pupil premium funding and how this funding impacts on the performance of pupils. They are also fully aware of the achievement of other groups of pupils in the school, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, boys, and the most and least able pupils. They talk knowledgeably about the curriculum changes that have been made in order to meet the needs of different groups of pupils effectively.

Safeguarding is highly effective and there is a strong culture of safeguarding apparent in the school. Staff receive regular and appropriate training, which is reflected in the fact that they are confident to refer their concerns on to relevant parties. Staff understand the key issues facing young people and are confident in the use of school systems designed to protect pupils. Pupils feel very safe. This is a result of the training they receive through assemblies, tutor time and personal development days, and the confidence they have in school leaders and their teachers to keep them safe.

The school ensures that careers education is independent, impartial and accessible. It ensures that pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their progression routes beyond Studley High School. Vulnerable pupils are given additional support and guidance to ensure that they are directed to choices that are appropriate and will ensure successful progression routes. Strong links with the local business community contribute to enhancing pupils' experiences and developing their skills. All pupils in Year 10 undertake work experience, are involved in sessions that support their CV writing and, in Year 11, undertake mock interviews with local business people to develop their skills and confidence. This strong careers provision supports and promotes a culture of high aspirations and very high levels of success for pupils in moving on to the next stage of their education and training. In 2016, all pupils moved on to successful destinations:

95% of pupils moved into full-time education and 5% started apprenticeships.

External support

External links have been considerably strengthened by the school's achievement of teaching school status in 2016 – Studley High School is the lead school in the Shires Teaching School Alliance. This provides opportunities for staff to get involved in wide-ranging school-to-school support. As a consequence they are able to develop new skills and practices as well as to share their own, resulting in improved teaching and learning in this school and in the schools they support. For example, members of the mathematics department regularly support other schools and the English department has been helped to raise its performance by another high-performing local school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the significant improvements made to the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils, and to outcomes in English, as evident in school data for current cohorts of pupils, are maintained in future years.
- Ensure that the curriculum changes, introduced to meet more effectively the needs of pupils, continue to have the positive impact on achievement over time that is evident in school data for current cohorts of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector