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Mr Alun Harding
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Harding

Short inspection of Codsall Community High School

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018 with Natasha Lloyd, 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 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. You have a very detailed understanding of the strengths of the school and what areas need to be improved further. You and your senior team undertake robust evaluations of your school improvement plan, and this has secured clear actions for improvement. Your senior leadership team is carefully structured so that individuals' skills are carefully matched to their responsibilities and used to best effect. The senior leadership team work well together.

You carefully monitor the progress you make against your set actions and hold leaders and staff to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that is made by pupils. Despite some staffing instability, the majority of staff feel well supported and appreciate the guidance they receive from you and your senior team.

You rigorously analyse the school performance information and have rightly identified that although girls within the school make very strong progress, disadvantaged pupils and some boys do not make as much progress as they should. As a result of these findings, you have put a range of strategies in place, including '100% effort', in order to improve outcomes for these groups. You are now seeing the impact of these strategies as progress for both boys and disadvantaged pupils is improving.

You and your leaders have undertaken a variety of activities to capture the views of pupils across the school. You have asked them to complete questionnaires to gain

their views on a number of issues, from the quality of teaching to the programme of pastoral care. The majority of pupils agree that they feel well supported in school and their concerns are dealt with quickly. However, a minority of younger students feel less positive about their school experience and said that they would welcome further opportunities for their concerns to be heard.

Attendance and persistent absence figures within the school are in line with what is expected nationally, and you and your leaders keep detailed checks on how frequently individuals and groups come to school. Despite recent improvements, the attendance of both disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not good enough, and their persistent absence is unacceptably high. You acknowledge that initiatives to resolve these issues have been hampered by staffing issues and you have put further actions in place to address these shortcomings.

In your previous inspection report, inspectors noted that you should make improvements in some aspects of teaching and learning. You have rightly prioritised these areas within your school development plan and make regular checks to ensure that the requirements of whole-school policies are implemented. The additional focus on spelling and grammar skills is having a positive impact on pupils' progress across the majority of departments. Leaders have used the expertise within the English department to support other practitioners across the school. This has led to an improvement in standards of spelling and grammar across the school. This is consistently applied in the vast majority of departments.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are regularly and comprehensively trained in areas such as the 'Prevent' duty and as a result have a clear understanding of the actions they should take if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders in this area have an excellent knowledge of safeguarding requirements and rigorously follow through referrals to other agencies. Governors are also appropriately trained and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum provides pupils with guidance on how to keep themselves safe. Tutor time and assemblies cover a variety of topics, such as healthy relationships and stress management. As well as this support, pupils also have access to a confidential on-site counselling service. Pupils state that they feel safe in school. They are clear about who to go to if they have any concerns and say that any incidents of bullying are rare, but if they do occur are dealt with swiftly.

Inspection findings

- Information provided by leaders during the inspection shows that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress. During the past two years, you have improved provision for disadvantaged pupils across the school and have a

detailed overview of their performance. Pupil premium funding is appropriately allocated so that it addresses the specific needs of groups and individuals. Progress for disadvantaged pupils is now in line with that of other pupils nationally, and your own performance information shows that this improvement is continuing across all year groups.

- You are aware that boys do not do as well as they should in some subjects across the school. You and your senior leaders have responded promptly to this, and current performance information shows that outcomes for boys are improving. In the majority of subjects, teachers ensure that they provide the appropriate challenge and support for the boys within their lessons. On the majority of occasions, engagement in their learning is positive. However, in a small number of subjects, the expectations for boys are still too low and work in books is sometimes incomplete or poorly presented.
- In-school assessment information is robust. You have a very clear picture of whole-school performance and quickly identify individuals or groups that need to catch up. Girls' performance across the school is particularly strong, and published information shows that these pupils make progress that is above that of other pupils nationally. The picture for sixth-form progress is particularly positive. Students who undertake applied general courses have progress outcomes which are in the top 10% nationally. Also, progress measures in other subjects within the sixth form are at least in line with those of other students nationally.
- Governors know the school very well and as a result are effective in holding leaders to account. Their wide range of skills allows them to provide effective support to you and your senior team.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. Your senior team provides highly effective support to these pupils and engages well with outside agencies. You ensure that all teachers are well briefed on the specific needs of pupils and have strong communication systems. Parents and carers agree that the provision is positive, with one commenting how their child is 'seen as an individual' and that 'the school goes out of its way to prevent barriers.'
- Persistent absence has strongly improved for pupils in receipt of an education, health and care plan and is now significantly below the national average. However, the persistent absence of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is still higher than that which is expected nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pace of progress for boys improves so that they achieve consistently well across all subjects
- they further decrease the number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who are persistently absent.

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

Yours sincerely

Josie Leese
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Inspectors undertook 'learning walks' and observed teaching and learning in English, mathematics, science, art, computer science, drama, music and humanities.
- Meetings took place with you, your senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in some pupils' books.
- A telephone call was made to the local authority representative.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils around the school to gather views about behaviour and learning.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation about safeguarding and child protection, self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement plans, minutes of governors' meetings, records related to attendance and information relating to pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors took into account 115 responses to Parent View, along with 46 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 135 responses to the online pupils' questionnaire.