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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 March 2017

Mr Stephen Bond
Headteacher
Woodfield Academy
Studley Road
Redditch
Worcestershire
B98 7HH

Dear Mr Bond

Short inspection of Woodfield Academy

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2017 with Eddie Wilkes, 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 June 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 and your staff and governors have worked with pupils and parents to create a school that promotes ambition and self-belief. You and your staff lead and teach with a clear purpose. Staff spoke to inspectors of their commitment to the success of the school. Pupils are eager to talk about their achievements, the successes of others and their hopes for the future.

Improving learning and pupils' welfare are obvious priorities for the school. Pupils work well, show effort and are keen to succeed, especially when lessons are engaging. You have planned a rich variety of extra-curricular activities and trips that allow pupils to learn about the arts and sport in ways that provoke their curiosity. Pupils' conduct is typically courteous, both in lessons and around the school. There is an atmosphere of order and purpose. Pupils are polite and you have enabled them to develop their debating skills and to learn about democracy. Pupils do not tolerate prejudice and are eager to speak of the respect with which all citizens should be treated. Throughout your school there is a real sense of the reality of your school ethos: 'A school at the heart of the local community.'

At the last inspection, inspectors noted the many strengths of the school, including in leadership, teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour. The report identified several areas for attention. These were to improve teaching further by ensuring effective practice, to improve teachers' planning, particularly to offer more challenge to the most able, and to develop questioning skills. Staff are well trained and share

what works well with one another. You have placed a high priority on improving your teachers' skills. You check the impact of your training with regularity. Your staff speak highly of their professional development and say it has helped them plan their lessons so that they are increasingly engaging for pupils. Teaching, including the highly effective use of questioning and the school's assessment policy, leads to pupils' good progress. The most able pupils are now making good progress in key stages 2 and 3 because they are provided with teaching that challenges them and resources are more engaging.

In 2016 in key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as other pupils nationally in reading and in mathematics. However, this year, in key stages 2 and 3, gaps are diminishing between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. You have identified that continuing to boost progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a key priority for further development.

The governing body is effective and is a strength of the school. Whether they are helping to motivate pupils who are at risk of falling behind or challenging you and your leaders to aspire ever higher, governors are integral to your school's development. Alongside teachers, they are strong advocates for the school and enjoy helping to create the ethos of success. You help them to take difficult decisions around staffing and the curriculum but, because you are a strong leadership team, you help each other and are open to what works and what does not.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured sure that all safeguarding arrangements are secure and thorough. Your recruitment procedures are effective and meet statutory guidance. You make sure that staff are aware of their duties and know what might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff say they understand what to do if they have concerns about safeguarding and to whom they should refer disclosures. You work well with other agencies to keep pupils safe, communicating regularly and efficiently. Pupils say they know how to keep themselves safe and how to help others stay safe. You have created a culture where safeguarding is a top priority for staff and pupils.

Inspection findings

- Outcomes are good for most pupils. You train your staff to use questioning skills well and make sure they pitch their teaching so that it builds on pupils' current level of understanding. Of the pupils who left the school in 2016, high proportions met challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics. The school met the government's floor standards in key stage 2 for reading, writing and mathematics.
- You monitor improvements in pupils' progress with increasing success. You and other leaders have a clear understanding of which subjects are strengths, for example mathematics in key stage 3. You know which pupil groups have underachieved and take action in response. For example, in 2016 the most able

disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 did not do as well as other pupils nationally in reading and writing.

- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, however, are doing well. Inspectors saw evidence of good progress for these pupils in both English and mathematics. When these pupils are challenged effectively, they do as well as other pupils with the same attainment on entry.
- You are effective at addressing underachievement. Your information on the progress of disadvantaged pupils indicates that they are now achieving as well as other pupils nationally in key stage 3. Progress seen in these pupils' books supports this view.
- You rigorously evaluate the work of the school and the effectiveness of your teaching. You asked a partner school to review outcomes for your pupils and to make recommendations. You then put in place many actions in response. For example, you improved the way you moderate and standardise teachers' assessments so that judgements made about pupils' attainment are more accurate.
- Your training programme allows teachers to share the most effective practice. In response to the findings of the previous inspection, you formed a strong partnership with schools in the area. This enables teachers to share expertise and to make more secure attainment predictions. It also means you learn from the best teaching practice and share successes with other schools to drive further improvement.
- You monitor carefully the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Currently, these pupils are making better progress in key stage 3 than in key stage 2, especially in English and mathematics. You know there is more to do to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are engaged with suitably challenging resources and activities in key stage 2.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally is diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 and in key stage 3. Inspectors saw evidence in your tracking information and in pupils' books that disadvantaged pupils are now doing better than last year in these subjects.
- You have detailed information on the progress of the most able pupils in all year groups. This shows that a significant majority of these pupils are doing as well as would be expected given their ability on entry.
- You have improved your training for teachers and linked this to performance management so that there is now greater accountability for pupils' progress. You have improved your reading assessments and ensured that pupils are reading more widely. Teachers now have clear information about the abilities of their pupils. They use this to plan more engaging lessons, with sufficient challenge for the most able.
- Last year in key stage 2, pupils in science did less well than expected given their prior attainment. However, this year, pupils are doing better. We saw evidence of progress in science in your tracking information, pupils' books and lessons. You have improved planning and the sharing of what works. Teachers are more

skilled and confident when teaching science.

- In science, you have made a number of effective improvements. All science staff are now subject specialists; they all teach key stage 2 and key stage 3 lessons. You have redesigned the science curriculum from Year 5 to Year 8. Teaching in science focuses on challenge and uses a wide range of resources. Teachers require pupils to make improvements in their work as a follow-up to assessments. As a result, and as seen in the quality of work in pupils' books, pupils are now making good progress in key stages 2 and 3.
- Attendance is improving. However, some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not attend regularly in the past. Their attendance is better this year with most pupil groups now attending with higher rates of regularity than in 2016.
- Nevertheless, there are still some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are not attending regularly enough. You have improved your support for these pupils. You work in partnership with agencies outside the school and provide support to families, when needed. You know this is an area for further development.
- You and your governors have communicated to the staff, pupils and the wider community, your determination that all shall succeed and the school will be a place of aspiration and success. You say that the ethos for the school is that there shall be 'an inclusive culture' and you want the 'absolute best outcomes for the children in our care'. There are signs that you are being successful in this aim: achievement is rising and staff are determined to help pupils fulfil their potential.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further reduce the overall absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- continue to improve teaching in key stage 2 so that all pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make even stronger progress over time from their starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Graham Tyrer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the day, inspectors held discussions with you and other senior leaders. I met members of the governing body. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and visited parts of 13 lessons, four of which were visited jointly with school leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them. Inspectors took account of 24 staff survey responses and 34 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors considered 24 parent responses by free text. There were no responses to the pupil survey. An inspector spoke with pupils at lunchtime. Inspectors analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, and safeguarding policies and procedures.