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Josephine Smith
Head of School
Kesteven and Sleaford High School – Selective Academy
Jermyn Street
Sleaford

Dear Mrs Smith

Short Inspection of Kesteven and Sleaford High School – Selective Academy

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 2017 with Shan Oswald, 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 to be carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 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 as head of school in September 2015, you have provided strong leadership and kept a clear focus on improving pupils' outcomes. You know that provisional performance information indicates that the 2017 Year 11 cohort made less progress than did pupils in previous years. You are determined to ensure that any weaknesses are tackled quickly and effectively. You are rightly pleased that the pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have made better progress than in previous years.

A key strength of the school is the way that school improvement is seen as everyone's responsibility. You believe in empowering your staff, as well as in holding them to account for the pupils' achievement. This gives the school a strong sense of purpose and togetherness. It helps to explain, for example, why one parent said, 'There is a very strong school community feeling.' As a result, attendance is high and many pupils choose to stay on into the sixth form.

The school is led well. You see the value of distributing leadership across the school so that improvement actions can have more impact. The responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress is given to subject leaders, as well as to heads of year. This has created a robust system for checking that the pupils are achieving well enough.

Governors provide school leaders with strong support and challenge. They visit the school regularly to talk to pupils and meet with staff. They know the strengths and

weaknesses of the school because you and other school leaders give them accurate information about how well the school is doing. Governors use this information to hold you and the leadership team to account for the school's performance. As a result, there is a strong impetus throughout the school to bring about further improvements.

You have created opportunities for staff to share good practice and to learn from others, to the benefit of your pupils. You have established strong links with your partner school in the multi-academy trust. This school has adopted your system for keeping track of pupils' progress. Your staff benefit from shared opportunities for training and carry out observations of teaching with staff from the partner school. These approaches have ensured that teaching, learning and assessment continue to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff are vigilant and promptly report any concerns that they have about pupils' well-being. The school's records are detailed and securely kept. Staff receive appropriate training that is updated regularly on how to keep pupils safe. The school has strong links with social care and early help support agencies, although only a small number of referrals are made.

Pupils say that they feel safe and know to whom to refer, if they have any concerns. The names of the designated safeguarding team are displayed prominently on noticeboards around the school and on visitors' badges.

Inspection findings

- You have dealt with the areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection. Subject leaders monitor teaching and learning closely in their subjects, so that they can identify strengths and weaknesses and take action where teaching needs to improve. Middle leaders also check regularly on pupils' progress with class teachers. This ensures that pupils stay on track towards their targets and, in some cases, results in pupils being set higher targets.
- With other leaders and governors, you evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses openly and honestly. As a result, you identify how best to improve the school's performance. Governors keep a watchful eye on pupils' progress and are alert to any signs of underachievement. They know the impact of the strategies that you have implemented to boost pupils' progress, such as additional coaching and revision support for Year 11 pupils and additional teaching in key stage 3.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continue to be good in all subjects, including mathematics. In mathematics lessons, pupils are encouraged to solve problems and to explain their learning, which has led them to become more confident.
- Where learning is strongest, work is pitched at the right level for pupils. Sometimes, tasks are too easy or hard and questioning is not used effectively to check on pupils' understanding. You are dealing with this by allocating coaching

partners to teachers where the need for further support has been identified.

- The sixth form continues to provide a good standard of education. The proportion of pupils in the school who stay on into the sixth form is higher than the national average. Students' attainment has improved over the last three years. The school provides its sixth form jointly with its partner school in the Robert Carre Trust, as well as with another sixth form. This means that the school can offer a greater range of courses to students, including non-vocational courses, than would be possible otherwise. The proportion of students who take up university places is well above that of other sixth forms.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form continue to be good. Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies and pitch learning at the right level. Students know the targets that they are working towards and understand precisely what they need to do to meet their targets.
- Overall, pupils' attendance at the school is higher than the national average. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was much lower in 2016 than that of other pupils in the school. The attendance of this group of pupils has since improved significantly. The proportion of these pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to direct support towards the eligible pupils. Effective support is provided by learning mentors and through teaching in small groups, particularly for those pupils who have been identified as underachieving compared to other pupils in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- strengthen the quality of teaching by sharing the best practice in the use of assessment to plan pupils' learning, to check on their understanding and to identify what they need to do to improve their work.

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

Your sincerely

Julian Scholefield
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior leaders. Together, we talked about improvements that have been made since the last inspection. We observed the start of the day's activities, observed lessons and carried out a series of short visits to classrooms to observe learning across the school and the sixth form. Some observations were carried out with some of your senior leaders. I met with your designated safeguarding lead, deputy designated safeguarding lead and your special educational needs coordinator. I also met with your chair of governors and the executive headteacher of the Robert Carre Trust. We talked to subject leaders, as well as meeting with pupils to obtain their views about the school.

We scrutinised a range of documentary evidence, including: the single central record of staff; safeguarding records; records about pupils' outcomes, the school improvement plan and department plans; the school's self-evaluation and pupils' exercise books from a range of subjects.

Inspectors considered the views of parents based on the 69 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and Ofsted's free-text service. They considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils and the 30 responses to the survey for staff.