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Mr Gary Peat
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Dear Mr Peat

Short inspection of Woodbrook Vale School

Following my visit to the school on 5 February 2019 with Gill Martin, 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The strategic approach taken by the leadership team to improve the quality of teaching, combined with the deliberate alignment of the deployment of pupil premium, catch-up and special educational needs funding has been highly effective. As a result, outcomes for all pupils have improved and there has been a significant improvement in the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You and the effective leadership team use secure evidence to plan further improvements to teaching, learning and achievement. The school development plan clearly articulates the priorities for improvement and what needs to be done to further improve the school's effectiveness. Staff who met with inspectors, and/or completed the staff survey made it clear that they fully support your vision. They are proud to work at the school and feel that it is well led and managed. Staff also value the support they receive from senior leaders and your strong focus on their workload, as well as their well-being. All staff model the school's core values of 'aspire, enjoy, succeed', creating clear and high expectations for pupils.

The school is calm and orderly, with pupils demonstrating exemplary behaviour towards each other, staff and visitors as a result of the effective strategies the

school uses to promote respect and self-discipline. Pupils are positive about the school and feel supported, both academically and pastorally. Over 95% of pupils who completed the online questionnaire take part in the breadth of opportunities offered both during the school day and after school. Parents and carers are also overwhelmingly positive about the school. A comment from a parent, who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, summed up the views of many when they wrote, 'My daughter has been excellently supported by all staff at Woodbrook, both to achieve her potential academically and to participate in extra-curricular activities and the school community.'

Governors are extremely passionate about the school. They speak proudly about the school's achievements and constantly strive for further improvement. The governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. They provide strong challenge to the leadership team in how to enhance their performance further. As a result, they have contributed successfully to maintaining the school's focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Governors have also provided strong support to leaders in improving teaching across the school, developing the curriculum and strengthening impartial careers guidance.

The previous inspection report identified that teachers needed to have high expectations for the progress that pupils can make in every lesson. In order to achieve this there needed to be appropriately challenging work for different groups of pupils in all lessons, as well as the very highest standards for the presentation of pupils' written work. Lesson observations and a work scrutiny carried out by inspectors provided overwhelming evidence that teachers set tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to ensure that they reach their full potential. The majority of pupils' written work is well presented, with evidence that pupils are making good progress. There is no discernible difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders collaborate effectively to ensure that a culture of safeguarding permeates the school and staff are clear about their responsibilities. Recruitment checks and the maintenance of the school's single central record are rigorous. Record-keeping is thorough, secure and fit for purpose. Robust procedures are in place to follow up absence. All staff and governors are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and of the particular safeguarding issues relevant to the local community. Staff know what to do should they need to make a referral to the designated child protection lead. Pupils said that there are many learning opportunities within the curriculum about how to stay safe, particularly how to stay safe online. Evidence from an effective Year 8 assembly on e-safety which was observed supports this.

A dedicated team of staff, coordinated by the designated safeguarding leader, supports vulnerable pupils. These staff work with determination and sensitivity with pupils, parents and carers, and external agencies. Child protection practice is

effective and timely action is taken to seek external help for pupils when needed. The governing body routinely checks that all processes and policies are secure and that the school's records are thorough and complete. Governors are strongly involved with all aspects of safeguarding. They have listened to the views of staff and pupils and have been proactive in enhancing the security of the site. Consequently, there has been an investment in technology in order to minimise any associated safeguarding risks. They have also been effective in supporting leaders in embedding positive mental health and well-being strategies for both staff and pupils.

The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said their children are safe at school. Similarly, responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires overwhelmingly supported the view that pupils are safe at the school.

Inspection findings

- The recent appointment of an additional senior leader, responsible for the strategic leadership and management of the school's support for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is having a significant impact on outcomes for these groups. A third of disadvantaged pupils in the school also have SEND. This increased capacity has enabled a cohesive team to be created, which includes an assistant coordinator for SEND, learning support assistants and a group of pupil premium champions within the staff.
- Outcomes for pupils in the vast majority of subjects have been consistently strong for several years. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points. However, GCSE results suggest that progress for disadvantaged pupils declined in 2018. You are clear about the reasons for this and the work of the additional senior leader is focused on improving outcomes in key stage 4. Your assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 are, once again, making at least good progress. This is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- Quality assurance by those with SEND experience is being used to develop teaching and to refine curriculum provision so that it becomes more inclusive and flexible. The strategic deployment of pupil premium champions and learning support assistants, together with targeted use of catch-up funding, is having a positive impact on pupils' literacy development. Opportunities for speaking activities in lessons to consolidate key vocabulary were observed in several lessons as well as in group discussions. This is having a positive impact on all pupils, but particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Teachers use the teaching strategies and resources which are promoted by pupil premium champions. Teachers also make good use of funding to provide ingredients, materials and resources for classroom activities, so that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on opportunities to develop their skills in practical subjects.
- Skilful questioning to help pupils recall prior learning and make connections was observed in small-group work in science as well as in French, geography and

English lessons. This was particularly effective in engaging lower-ability pupils, who made good progress as a result.

- Subject leaders regularly share teaching strategies for engaging disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. They use professional development opportunities with their departments to embed these into the delivery of the curriculum. Where teachers apply the school's marking and feedback policy well, pupils know how to improve their work and make faster progress as a result. However, evidence of marking in books suggests that there is inconsistent practice both across and within subjects.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND has also been a key focus for leaders. Persistent absence rates continue to be below the 2018 national average for both groups. The attendance of pupils with SEND continues to be above the national average for 2018. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has decreased. A small group of disadvantaged pupils with complex medical needs, off-site provision and two pupils who joined in the autumn term, from out of the area, with poor attendance have impacted negatively on overall attendance. A range of strategies, including attendance surgeries, home visits, pupil premium champion mentoring, 'early help' referrals and closer liaison with external support, has been used since January, but evidence of impact is difficult to evaluate.
- Significant work by leaders and governors has been done to construct a curriculum offer at key stage 4 that is ambitious and designed to give pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and cultural understanding they need to succeed in life. There has been a shift from 'options pathways' to an approach which focuses on guidance and advice for all pupils and their parents. This, combined with a breadth of choice for pupils at key stage 4, meets the needs of all, but particularly disadvantaged, pupils. An early analysis of options choices for Year 9 pupils suggests that this has been successful. In addition, the quality of impartial careers education, advice and guidance is being enhanced so that pupils and their parents have higher aspirations for next steps in education, training or employment.
- Leaders have been tenacious in capturing and analysing data for the numbers of pupils in sustained education, employment or training. As a result of partnership work with local post-16 providers, the school has been able to confirm that figures for its pupils who are not in education, employment or training is 0% and not 8%, as published in national data. This strongly suggests that leaders' actions to promote post-16 courses and employment through stronger impartial careers guidance, combined with the focus on increasing aspirations, are being increasingly successful.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves so that it is consistently in line with that of other pupils

- teachers consistently provide feedback to pupils that helps them to improve their work and make faster progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we met with you and other leaders as well as members of the governing body. We met with the coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND and a group of teachers. We met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their learning. With a member of the leadership team, inspectors visited mathematics, English, science and modern foreign language lessons, in a range of year groups and conducted a scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' work from a range of subjects.

We examined a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school development plan, information about current pupils' progress and attainment, analyses of both attendance and behaviour, child protection records and the current pupil premium plan. We also considered the 78 responses to Parent View, the 45 responses to the online staff questionnaire and the 52 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.