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7 February 2019

Mr Wayne Birks
Principal
St George's Academy
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Dear Mr Birks

Short inspection of St George's Academy

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 2019 with Tim Croft, Ofsted Inspector, and John Edwards, 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.

You demonstrate that you know the school well and the self-evaluation is accurate. You have high expectations and are not complacent about what needs improving. The areas you identify which require improvement match those identified by the inspection team. The detailed plans to address any areas that require improvement are clear and appropriate. You and senior colleagues work well as a team. Consequently, you have been able to improve on the school's strengths and address many areas of weakness.

The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. Your governors also have a detailed awareness of the school's strengths and of the areas requiring development and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. Governors are provided with timely information by leaders and have a clear understanding of data. As a result, they are well equipped to provide you with critical challenge.

Leaders' actions to improve teaching and learning have had some success. In lessons, teachers generally demonstrate strong subject knowledge and have high expectations. They plan lessons effectively and encourage pupils to participate well. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, most pupils make progress in most subjects. However, there is some

lack of consistency and patchy improvement in some subjects.

Teachers and pupils have very positive relationships. Pupils are polite, well mannered and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils generally demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. However, not all pupils, particularly boys, take enough pride in their work. Pupils follow instructions quickly and lessons flow with minimal disruption. Instances of serious poor behaviour are rare and, consequently, exclusions are low. Most pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance has been broadly in line with the national average in recent years.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of leaders' actions to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and students, specifically girls, in the sixth form. We looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to raise the achievement of pupils in the key subject of English. We also looked at the progress you have made in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the school's last inspection. Lastly, we checked whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below.

You have responded very well to the areas for improvement from the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection, inspectors asked the school to increase the challenge in lessons for the most able pupils. This has been, and remains, a key priority in the school's improvement plans, and teachers have received additional training to help improve their skills in this area. While not fully addressed, inspection evidence indicates that leaders have made good progress in challenging the most able pupils, especially in key stages 3 and 4. Since the last inspection, there has been a whole-school drive on improving extended writing, and pupils are now writing at greater length.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are fit for purpose. Systems to check that adults who work at the school are suitable to work with children are appropriate. Record-keeping is of a good quality and any concerns are logged promptly and followed up appropriately. The school works well with a range of outside agencies to support pupils and make sure that they are kept safe.

Pupils with whom inspectors spoke explained that they know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils are well informed about what they can do to keep themselves safe. Pupils also say bullying is rare and, if it occurs, is generally dealt with well by staff.

You make sure that all staff and governors fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities. You provide regular training to ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date. Consequently, staff understand the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil, and you have established a culture of vigilance in the school.

Inspection findings

- Overall, pupils' progress over time in their GCSE subjects has been broadly in line with the national average. Data provided by the school on current pupils, and work seen in books, indicates that current pupils are on track to achieve similar progress. However, inconsistencies remain between subjects in the amount of progress being made.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils nationally in GCSE examinations. Leaders have reviewed the approaches to the spending of the pupil premium funding and now use the money much more effectively. As a result, the school's strategies to support disadvantaged pupils are having a positive impact on their progress. Teachers are much better equipped to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils in the classroom. Systems have been set up to track the performance of disadvantaged pupils more effectively and to provide support to those pupils who are not on track to meet their targets. Consequently, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been improving.
- Year 13 students have made progress in their A-level courses, which has been below the national average for the last three years. This has been largely due to the underachievement of girls, whose progress has been significantly below the national average. Leaders have acted to address this, for example with weekly monitoring and mentoring. Data provided by the school indicates that current students in Year 13, including girls, are making better progress. The sixth form provides a good range of courses. Staff work successfully to ensure that students are placed on the most appropriate courses to meet their needs.
- The progress of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in English has not been as high as in other key subjects in the school. Leaders have had some success in bringing improvement to this subject. Teaching in English is now more consistent in quality and, in 2018, pupils made average progress in their GCSE courses by the end of Year 11. However, the progress of some pupils, particularly those who enter the school with high prior attainment, is not yet good enough. Leaders are taking the required action to resolve this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to take action to improve provision and outcomes for students in the sixth form so that progress is at least consistently good
- work continues to eliminate relative underperformance in English so that pupils' progress is similar to that in the best-performing subjects
- they continue to take action to ensure that the pupil premium grant is used even more effectively to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged 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 Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Boyd
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, other senior leaders and governors. Inspectors visited several subject areas with senior leaders to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. They met with groups of pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks on staff. They reviewed a range of other documentary evidence, including that relating to the ongoing self-evaluation and data on pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspectors considered the views of 138 parents through their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and Ofsted's free-text service. They considered the 112 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils, but inspectors considered the responses of pupils to the school's own commissioned survey, which was carried out last term.