

10 December 2015

Mrs Nys Hardingham
Headteacher
Dundas Lane
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO3 5XT

Dear Mrs Hardingham

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Admiral Lord Nelson School

Following my visit with Simon Hughes HMI to your academy on 20 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the academy's previous inspection.

Context

This is a comprehensive academy with 995 pupils, aged 11–16, on roll. Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. A lower-than-average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils included on the register of special educational needs is higher than is seen typically. Staffing is stable. The large majority of pupils join the academy at the start of Year 7 and leave at the end of Year 11.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils behave well around the academy. Pupils are attentive in class, listen to their teachers and show a commitment to their studies. Pupils move swiftly into lessons and settle down quickly to their work. In lessons, there are few incidents of low level disruption. Lessons engage pupils. For example, in a textiles lesson, Year 7 pupils were concentrating hard and enjoying developing their skills in weaving. Some silly behaviour did occur in the tutorial sessions observed at the start of the day. This is because while the pupils were quite enjoying the activities that they were doing, the sessions did not provide a brisk enough start to learning, and pupils became inattentive.

Pupils move safely and thoughtfully around the site. You told us that at break- and lunchtimes, 'It just seems to work', and I found this to be the case. Pupils chatted to friends, played football on the artificial turf, used the library and ate their food considerately. Pupils that eat academy lunch are very complimentary about the standard of food available. The academy's routines are well established and pupils move on the stairs and through corridors sensibly. Teachers supervise pupils in a way that models respect, and, consequently, pupils are appropriately self-disciplined.

A highly effective pastoral care team integrates its work well to ensure that the agreed systems are implemented consistently, yet the team members are also flexible enough to support the specific needs of individuals. This work is ambitious, with a clear focus upon supporting the emotional needs of young people, combined with a clear expectation that pupils should be in lessons and learning. I did come across one pupil who had side-stepped the processes and was not in a lesson. The academy should ensure there are no loop holes in their day-to-day provision.

The academy's inclusion centre, Broadside, supports pupils who are struggling to attend the main academy on a full-time basis. These pupils work well independently and are confidently able to explain what they are working on. As a result of regular and appropriate careers advice and guidance, all pupils working in Broadside are ambitious for their futures and have taken the right steps to prepare themselves for the next phase of their education. This provision illustrates the typical way in which the academy goes the extra mile to support pupils. Staff take into account the needs and views of pupils clearly. Successfully implemented plans enable pupils to become

more effective learners. Several pupils spoke very movingly of the care and help they had received.

Bullying is rare, and when it does occur pupils are confident that it will be dealt with swiftly. Pupils feel that they can tell any member of staff of their concerns, and that these will be picked up and responded to. The academy keeps careful logs of incidents and has clear lines of action to effectively deal with issues identified.

The academy has thorough procedures for keeping pupils safe. Pupils gave many examples of how the academy helps them to keep safe both online and personally. Pupils feel very well cared for and confident that the academy is physically and emotionally a secure place for them to learn.

You have introduced a new behaviour code recently and pupils have noticed the difference this has made; several commented, 'it's much stricter'. Pupils feel that the current system is fair and more consistently applied by staff. Pupils are very clear as to the consequences of any poor behaviour and some told of how they had modified their behaviour as a result of the new sanctions. Staff have been impressed at how quickly the system has been accepted by pupils and of the positive impact on their behaviour. This is because you and other senior leaders have robustly and visibly promoted the higher expectations. However, a few pupils were able to identify some flaws in the system. It would be useful for leaders to check how well the new code is adhered to over time, and to evaluate its impact on pupil outcomes, making modifications as needed.

Pupils in all year groups are very positive about the system for giving them feedback on their work. They like the comments about their attitude to work and one pupil told us that striving for a higher grade has been a key factor in helping improve his learning in German.

The academy has well-developed systems to support pupils whose attendance is not regular enough. Patterns of non-attendance are identified, and the academy uses a range of approaches to help get these pupils to and keep them in lessons. This has paid dividends, but there are still some groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, whose attendance is not high enough. The academy must be relentless in pursuing their work in this area.

As a result of a carefully considered and implemented policy, pupils make the transition from primary schools to the academy very smoothly. Close working with feeder primary schools, as well as a co-ordinated approach from the pastoral leaders and the special educational needs co-ordinator, ensures that the learning needs of the pupils are identified and addressed early on so that pupils make a firm start in Year 7. Your plan to consolidate and further develop this work with your partner primary schools is sensible.

Leaders at all levels have modelled high expectations for all pupils, in particular those in Year 11 who clearly articulated that even more was expected of them as role models for younger pupils. However, at times in lessons, pupils are too reliant on staff. To develop their attitude to learning, pupils need to be more resilient in tackling work that is demanding or that they find a challenge.

Priorities for further improvement

- review the purpose of tutorials so that there is a clearer emphasis on learning at the start of the day
- continue to improve rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs
- monitor rigorously the impact that the new behaviour code is having on outcomes.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Portsmouth, to the Secretary of State for Education and to the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helena Read
Her Majesty's Inspector