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Mr Dave Alexander
Headteacher
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Kingshill Road
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Dear Mr Alexander

Short inspection of Rednock School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018 with Ofsted Inspectors Benjamin Houghton and Malcolm Willis, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide strong leadership with a clear sense of direction. In recent years, you have used opportunities to appoint new senior teachers to strengthen the leadership team. These senior leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities; you have ensured that they develop the expertise to be effective in bringing about improvements. It was obvious to inspectors that there are clear common goals for all leaders. Throughout the school, there is a strong drive to raise the expectations and aspirations of both staff and pupils.

Governors have a good awareness of the strengths of the school. They also understand what needs to be done to bring about further improvements and so they provide appropriate challenge and support to you and other leaders.

There have been several personnel changes at middle-leadership level. Middle leaders work closely with senior colleagues and are fully involved in checking the quality of the work in their areas of responsibility. This enhances the capacity of the staff body to work together as a team. The responses to the staff survey confirm that staff morale is good and your colleagues are committed to promoting the best progress possible for all pupils.

Your self-evaluation is detailed and corresponds closely to the views of inspectors. You know what is working well and also have in place plans to strengthen some areas of the school's work. In recent years, pupils have made good progress overall and gained examination results which compare well with national averages. However, you acknowledge that disadvantaged pupils have not consistently made progress which compares well with other pupils nationally and leaders are giving attention to resolving this difference. Leaders are also working to improve attendance rates.

Following the school's last inspection, you were asked to give particular attention to improving the progress of students in the sixth form. You were also advised to work on raising achievement, especially for the most able pupils, so that GCSE grades would reflect this. You have made secure progress in both areas, though you and other leaders are not complacent and are clear that there is still more work to do.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's leaders have developed an effective culture of keeping pupils safe from harm. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Detailed records are kept and these meet all statutory requirements. You make thorough checks to ensure that employees, volunteers and any other visitors to the school are suitable to work with pupils. Staff and pupils know how to report any matters which concern them.

The school has effective systems to monitor the well-being and safety of all pupils, and works closely with other agencies to follow up any matters which need further investigation or actions. Leaders' work with children who are looked after by the local authority show the positive impact of these arrangements.

All members of staff receive appropriate and regular training. Members of the governing body are also trained to a level that enables them to carry out their duties effectively. Pupils are well informed about the things that they can do to keep themselves safe, for example when using electronic communications. Attention has been given to educating pupils about road safety and the dangers of substance abuse. The school is working closely with Gloucestershire Constabulary and engaging with the 'Great Expectations' community education project.

A small proportion of parents expressed some concerns about bullying. Pupils, chosen at random around the school, told inspectors that bullying is not common. Pupils also told us that the school does deal swiftly and effectively with any incidents of bullying which are reported. Inspectors saw that conduct around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils confirmed that they feel that the school is a safe environment. Staff also clearly endorsed this view in their responses to the survey.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we discussed and agreed the areas for the inspection. These decisions were based on information about the school's work in

the last three years, along with your own evaluation of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement.

- Improving the sixth-form provision has been a high priority. Outcomes for students have not been as consistent or as good as they should have been. There is clear evidence of improvements now taking place. The new leaders of the sixth form understand well why too little progress has been made in the past and are addressing these shortcomings. Current students have been carefully advised and guided to ensure that they are studying courses which are most appropriate for them. Teachers know their students well and learning activities are tailored closely to the needs of individuals.
- Leaders have significantly improved the ethos of the sixth form, making it a more studious environment. Study time is supervised closely and a member of staff is always available to assist students. The learning capacity of students has been improved and they are now using their time more effectively. Students who talked with an inspector explained that they are enjoying their courses and feel confident about their progress.
- Students expressed high satisfaction about the help and guidance they are given through a carefully planned programme of tutorials. In recent years, students have been increasingly successful in securing their choices when taking their next steps into education or work.
- For a few years, the overall attendance rates at school have been below the national average, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have worked tirelessly with the school's staff and other agencies to improve attendance rates. Most pupils have responded positively to the challenge, and overall attendance rates have improved across the school. Representative pupils told inspectors that they value the rewards system, including recognition with certificates. Pupils also understand the need for good attendance and punctuality as preparation for adult life.
- Despite many efforts the school has not yet been successful in raising the attendance rates of a small proportion of pupils. Typically, these pupils face multiple challenges and are supported by medical or other services. Leaders are tenacious in trying to ensure that adequate provision is made for these pupils.
- Published data shows that the school's disadvantaged pupils have not made consistently good progress; there have been gaps between their attainments and those of other pupils nationally. Ongoing staff development has focused on ways to help these disadvantaged pupils to catch up. Inspectors noted that all teachers are well informed about the particular needs of pupils and the school is taking some effective steps to address barriers. Teachers are becoming more skilled at tailoring tasks to suit the needs of individuals and an inspector saw examples of particularly effective practice in lessons for Year 11 pupils.
- Staff are using numerous strategies to support disadvantaged pupils and, at present, it is difficult for leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of any particular action. Consequently, leaders are not sure about what is having greatest impact

and this makes it difficult to make further improvements. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to achieve consistency.

- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work to assess the progress of all pupils across the curriculum. The delivery of high-quality teaching has been another key focus for staff development. Leaders make regular visits to classrooms to monitor the quality of the provision. They give feedback to teachers and so help them to improve further. All departments have plans in place so that continual improvements can be made.
- Inspectors noted that pupils are given good advice about how to improve their work and usually they follow the advice. Teachers plan activities to build on previous learning and secure better progress. Particularly strong progress was seen in some science lessons, but in some other subjects, including mathematics, there is not yet consistency in the quality of teaching or in pupils' progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- checks to monitor the effectiveness of actions taken to help disadvantaged pupils are precisely focused
- standards in the sixth form rise further
- sixth-form students strengthen the skills to be highly effective and independent learners.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Cox
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, inspectors spoke with you and other senior teachers, including those with lead responsibility for safeguarding. I had a meeting with the chair and the vice-chair of governors. We visited lessons across all year groups including the sixth form to observe learning in a broad range of subjects. We took opportunities to look at the quality of work in samples of pupils' books and talked with them about their progress. We talked informally with pupils around the school to gather their views. We held a meeting with a small group of pupils to discuss their learning experiences. In another meeting, we met a group of sixth-form students to talk about their views.

We considered documents relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding and attendance. I scrutinised the school's evaluation documents and

the current improvement plan. We took into account 72 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey. A small number of additional communications were received from parents, and the wider matters raised were considered. One pupil responded to the pupil survey and the views of 52 members of staff were gathered through the staff survey.