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5 December 2018

Mrs Colette Macklin  
Interim Principal  
Queensbury Academy  
Deanstones Lane  
Queensbury  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD13 2AS

Dear Mrs Macklin

### **No formal designation inspection of Queensbury Academy**

Following my visit with Steven Shaw, Her Majesty's Inspector and Fiona Dixon, Ofsted Inspector to your academy on 21 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the academy.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with you, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the school's trust and a range of colleagues who have responsibility for safeguarding and the development of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. An inspector met with a member of the governing body. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, as they arrived at school and during breaktime and lunchtime.

Inspectors held meetings with a group of staff and two groups of pupils, one from key stage 3 and one from key stage 4. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally. Inspectors considered the school's information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, including incidents of exclusion. They also looked at the support that you – and other school leaders – organise and provide for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Inspectors spoke to the special educational needs coordinator and considered how well school leaders ensure that

the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence, including procedures and policies linked to dealing with complaints.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

The school is taking effective action to improve the effectiveness of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

### **Context**

Queensbury Academy is an average-sized secondary school. It became part of Feversham Education Trust in September 2016. There was a significant change in leadership within the school in January 2018. At this time, the trust appointed a new CEO who has responsibility for all of the schools in the trust. In addition, you were appointed as interim principal to lead Queensbury Academy. A permanent vice-principal also started work in January. A new permanent principal has been appointed but has yet to begin this role. You will maintain your contact with the school as you take up a role within the trust overseeing the quality of leadership over several settings.

The proportion of pupils at school from minority ethnic groups is above average, and the range of ethnicities is wide. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is also above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is average, although the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.

Ofsted has been notified of concerns about pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and issues of a safeguarding nature. This inspection focused on the wider issues arising from these concerns.

### **Inspection findings**

Since January 2018, there has been a step change in the quality of leadership at school. Members of staff and pupils confirm that new leaders are having a positive impact on the quality of education on offer. Inspectors agree. The systems you have in place to ensure that pupils are safe are effective. In addition, you and other leaders are improving the effectiveness of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. You agree with inspectors, however, that there is a way to go in this area of school life and that you are 'on a journey'. You are committed to dealing with any weaknesses that are still present.

Pupils and members of staff say that standards of behaviour have improved since your appointment in January. You were joined at this time by the new vice-principal and CEO. Pupils told inspectors of how unruly the school has been in the past and that it felt at times 'chaotic'. During the inspection, you and your colleagues reflected on how much better the behaviour of pupils has become. Inspectors saw first-hand that pupils focus well in most classrooms and that the school is generally calm during lesson times.

However, inspectors also found that the behaviour of some pupils in lower-ability groups is not good. In addition, pupils' behaviour when moving between lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime is not good enough. Many pupils adhere to leaders' expectations, but too many pupils meander to their next lesson rather than moving with purpose. Too many 'mess around' at breaktime and lunchtime while waiting in the queue or seeing their friends. You recognise this. Inspectors can also confirm, however, that current standards of behaviour are much better than in the past and that you are having a positive impact in this regard.

Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils during the inspection, both in formal meetings and during lessons or at breaktime. We found them to be honest and forthright in their opinions. Your system of 'choice, chance, consequence' is well understood by pupils. They credit this as having a positive impact on behaviour in lessons and say that teachers are trying to implement this system consistently. In this system, pupils are given the 'choice' to improve their behaviour and are given a second 'chance' to comply with adults' requests. Pupils receive a negative 'consequence' – such as a short detention – should they decide not to adhere to your standards. Pupils say that 'things aren't perfect' but they clearly see improvements.

You used fixed-term exclusion as one of the tools with which to draw a line under poor behaviour when you arrived. As pupils became more aware of your new, higher expectations, fixed-term exclusions started to decrease in number. You are aware that the strategies that are used to improve the behaviour of more challenging students need to be even more effective. You are also aware that the use of fixed-term exclusions to deal with instances of poor behaviour has been too high. You and your team are committed to this. You are continuing to develop other strategies to keep pupils engaged in education so that they do not miss school because of exclusion or absence.

Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare at school. They say that if ever there is an issue with bullying, members of staff deal with it effectively. Some pupils act as 'bullying ambassadors' and help others to approach an adult should they be afraid to speak out. Pupils say that teachers challenge any discriminatory language that is heard. It is clear that you – and other leaders – promote tolerance within the school community. You celebrate difference while focusing on what everyone has in common. Pupils talked to inspectors about differences in faith, race, gender and sexuality in a mature and inclusive way.

You have ensured that safeguarding is effective. Not only are policies compliant and paperwork up to date, but a culture of safeguarding is alive at your school. Adults show care and concern for pupils. You have strengthened the team of staff with responsibility for safeguarding by appointing two deputy safeguarding leaders. Not only is staff training comprehensive and timely, but you have also developed a strategy to this element of staff training. You make sure that specific issues relating to your pupils – and the community which you serve – are covered.

You and the trustees have been very practical in making sure that pupils are kept physically safe. For example, significant investment has been made in new fencing around the site. This keeps pupils inside the campus and ensures that they cannot leave without permission. Any visitors must now also follow procedures when accessing the site. Trustees have also invested in the building itself, allowing members of staff to better regulate the movement of pupils. Pastoral leaders and senior staff now have their offices strategically placed within the building. The timetabling of lessons allows pastoral staff linked to particular year groups to be in the same area of the building as their pupils more often. CCTV has been installed to allow members of staff to quickly identify any pupils that are not behaving well when moving around the building and to deal with this appropriately. These strategies have been important in helping to improve standards of behaviour.

You and your staff use an electronic system to track any behavioural or safeguarding issues that occur. This is effective. For example, the system helps you to make sure that pupils who are more vulnerable are given the support that they need. You and your team are highly tenacious in ensuring that outside agencies support these pupils when required. You keep a detailed timeline of support that these pupils receive and check that any 'next steps' that have been promised are being delivered. You use weekly 'every child matters' meetings for members of staff to share information and intelligence on how vulnerable pupils are progressing and how they seem in themselves. You have systems to help you to 'keep your ear to the ground' and ensure that any issues within the local community are addressed within school. For example, recently, you were made aware of dangerous behaviour with fireworks in the community. You and your staff addressed this directly through assemblies so that your pupils became fully aware of the associated risks.

You know that many of your pupils need additional support and have developed a range of spaces and programmes to this end. For example, 'the den' is a space where adults work to support pupils who have additional social, emotional or mental health needs. Additional provision is available for pupils who speak English as an additional language. 'The hub' is a space where pupils who access vocational courses in other providers spend time focusing on English and mathematics, among other subjects. You provide a suite of rooms where pupils with SEND are supported by members of staff. Inspectors confirm that there is a lot of additional support on offer for pupils. You agree that there is more work to be done in making sure that this support is correctly matched to pupils' needs and that it is effective. What is

clear is that you will try new strategies to meet the needs of the pupils in your care, and that this has a high priority at school.

In a similar way to managing behaviour, you have implemented strong systems to deal with persistent absence and lower rates of attendance. Green shoots are in evidence. You and the trustees – having seen that too many pupils were not attending school regularly enough – increased the size of the attendance team. This move allowed you to increase the capacity, for example to conduct home visits. Inspectors compared rates of attendance – and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent – this year with last year. Improvements can be seen, although you are fully aware that pupils' attendance needs to increase further and that the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent needs to decrease further.

It is the bold action of the trust in appointing strong and effective leaders that has started to turn the school around. Everyone can see this. Parents and carers complain less now, as they trust your uncompromising, honest and direct response to their concerns. Teachers praise the support that you give them to develop their skills in managing behaviour. Pupils see the recent improvements. Inspectors judge that you are keeping pupils safe and that you are taking effective action to improve the effectiveness of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. Inspectors were also very clear in underlining to you – and representatives of the trust – that weaknesses are still present that need urgent attention.

### **External support**

The trust has used external, independent specialists to advise on a variety of procedures and protocols as a direct response to parental complaints. As a result, the complaints procedure itself has been altered, and systems and processes linked to attendance have been overhauled. The majority of changes that have taken place since January are as a direct result of external appointments to senior positions. These colleagues have brought expertise from their previous roles to this particular setting.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the standard of pupils' behaviour when moving between lessons – and at breaktime and lunchtime – improves
- pupils' focus in lessons – particularly those in lower-ability groups – strengthens
- pupils' attendance increases and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent decreases
- any additional support offered to help individual pupils matches their particular needs more precisely

- strategies that are used to improve the behaviour of more challenging students are more effective, and that the use of fixed-term exclusions to deal with instances of poor behaviour continues to decrease.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**