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Sue Carbert  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Carbert

### **Short inspection of Ousedale School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2016 with Jane Cartwright, 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 May 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Pupils are proud of their achievements and their school. They benefit from a culture where teachers are ambitious for what pupils can achieve and success is celebrated. Well-planned, engaging lessons capture pupils' enthusiasm. They have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Musical, sporting and leadership activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award enrich pupils' development. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school sites. They conduct themselves in a calm orderly manner and socialise happily together. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

At the last inspection, the inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school including in leadership, teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour. The inspectors identified some areas for specific attention. One was to further improve teaching and eliminate low-level disruption by ensuring that pupils, with different starting points, consistently tackle work of a suitable level of challenge. A second was to engage parents more fully in their children's education. Leaders and governors have, in the main, been successful in addressing these points. Teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection. Teaching typically provides suitable levels of challenge for all pupils including the most able and those who have special educational needs or disability. This enables pupils to make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Low-level disruption in lessons is increasingly rare. You have tackled less effective teaching in English and modern foreign languages such that pupils of all abilities now achieve well in English and are increasingly making good progress in languages. You have also strengthened leadership and teaching in science. However, these changes are recent and you recognise there is more work needed to secure

consistently good teaching and achievement in the subject. Since the last inspection, leaders have made concerted efforts to engage with parents more fully. Attendance at parents evenings, where you conduct surveys to capture parents' views, is now high. The school website provides a wealth of useful information about all aspects of school life. Parents are mainly positive about the school and some extremely so. However, a few parents feel that staff do not deal well with concerns they raise with the school about their child's education or treatment. A few pupils also raised this concern.

Over the last three years, in most A level subjects, students' progress by the end of year 13 was in line with that seen nationally, albeit with faster progress seen in Year 13 than Year 12. Leaders are working to address this, ensuring that they monitor individual students' progress carefully and put support in place for those who fall behind. School information shows that an increased proportion of current Year 12 students are on course to reach or exceed their targets this summer. Leaders also keep an eye on the proportion of students on track in each class so any less effective teaching can be addressed. However, leaders do not maintain a precise overview of how achievement in each subject is increasing over time. As a result, leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of the sixth form has been generous and governors do not have the sharp strategic analysis needed to hold leaders tightly to account for sixth form improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies when needed to ensure that any pupil at risk is suitably supported. Incidents of bullying, including prejudice bullying, are low and dealt with well. Staff receive suitable training, including on identifying and supporting those who may be at risk from extremism or radicalisation. Governors keep abreast of the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

The curriculum, including assemblies, tutor time and personal, social, health and education lessons, helps pupils learn to keep safe. They know who to speak to if they have any concern.

### **Inspection findings**

- Governors are well briefed on most aspects of the school's performance and hold leaders to account, rigorously challenging any perceived areas of weakness. However, governors have not been given the information needed to develop a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the sixth form and whether it is improving well enough.
- Leaders have successfully developed the curriculum and assessment system at key stage 3 to prepare pupils for the more rigorous demands of the new GCSEs. Leaders use the information they collect from teachers' assessments effectively to track the progress of each pupil group so they are well placed to identify and address any area of weakness.

- Leaders have successfully tackled weaker teaching and achievement in English. Pupils' progress in both English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4 was in line with the national average in 2015. This was an improvement on 2014 when the proportion of pupils making good progress in English was low and as a result average achievement was low.
- On average, pupils made progress across subjects in line with the national figure by the end of key stage 4 in 2015. However, pupils' progress in science and modern foreign languages was below the national figure and only slightly improved on 2014. Pupils now typically make good progress in languages and increasingly achieve well in science.
- Leaders make effective use of additional pupil premium funding to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils. The gaps in the progress between these pupils and other pupils nationally in English and mathematics closed significantly between 2014 and 2015. The proportion of most-able disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress and least-able making expected progress was above that for others nationally in both subjects. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more advantaged peers nationally closed to less than half a grade on average in 2015, compared to 2014 when they were a grade behind. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school achieve increasingly well.
- The most-able pupils are making increasingly strong progress by the end of key stage 4. In 2015, the proportion of most-able pupils making expected or better progress in English was in line with the national figure and in mathematics it was above. In both subjects this was a noticeable improvement on 2014 outcomes. Most-able pupils currently in the school make strong progress in almost all subjects.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Pupils of different abilities typically undertake work at a suitable level of challenge across all subjects. As a result, they engage and learn well, and low-level disruption is rare.
- In 2015, by the end of year 13, sixth form students had, overall, made above average progress in their A levels. This was an improvement on previous years. Achievement at AS level has been in decline in recent years and was below average in 2015. School information shows an improving picture with students now making better progress. However, there is more to be done to secure consistently good progress in each subject and year.
- Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2015. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability with poor attendance was high in 2015 and had increased over time. New procedures, including increased contact with parents, are having an impact. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs with poor attendance has dropped markedly this year.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are low and have decreased notably over time. More personalised support is now in place for pupils who can exhibit challenging behaviour. Pupils typically behave very well. However, a few pupils report use of sexist or homophobic language, which they feel staff are not always aware of. Overall, exclusions are low and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who have been excluded has halved over the last six months.

- Parents and pupils are in the main very happy with the school. However, a few report that when they raise a concern with the school it is not well dealt with.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders develop a more precise overview of achievement in and across subjects in the sixth form, intervening as needed so teaching and achievement continue to improve
- recent improvements in leadership and teaching in science lead to improvements in achievement for all groups of pupils
- no parent or pupil have well-founded concerns that issues they raise with the school are not tackled.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, other leaders, teachers, the chair of the governing body and two other governors. Inspectors visited parts of 12 lessons jointly with leaders. The team inspector scrutinised a selection of pupils' English, science and modern foreign languages work jointly with subject leaders. I took account of 273 pupil survey responses, 90 staff survey responses and 143 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered 95 parent responses by free text and two by phone. The team inspector spent half of her time at the Olney Campus. Inspectors spoke with pupils at lunchtime at both school sites. Inspectors analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, and safeguarding policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.