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Mr S Brownlow  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Brownlow

### **Short inspection of King Charles I School**

Following my visit with Louise Mallett, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 24 May 2016, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You were appointed as headteacher in September 2014 and some members of your senior leadership team have also been appointed since the last inspection. Additionally, several middle leaders and some teaching staff are relatively new in post. Senior leaders and governors have a strong sense of commitment to school improvement and are striving to further improve the quality of education available for all pupils at the school.

The previous inspection report identified that leaders had a strong focus on raising achievement, high expectations of pupils and steadily increasing levels of attainment. The report also praised pupils feeling well cared for by the school and their high levels of attendance. These features remain very high quality in the school.

However, the previous inspection report also charged the school to improve the quality of monitoring teaching, learning and assessment and reduce the impact of variable middle leadership on achievement. In addition, leaders were directed to improve teachers' consistency in using the school's marking policy and use pupils' responses to questions more to develop teaching in lessons. Since the last inspection, leaders have taken action to effectively address each of these areas in

the school. For example, there are regular and successful opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching skills and more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. More teaching is now judged by you as good or outstanding. The role middle leaders play in monitoring teaching, learning and assessment has increased and they are accountable for performance in their areas of responsibility. As a result of these and other improvements, most current pupils in most subjects across all key stages are making good progress. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, in 2015, was much higher than the national average for this measure. This improvement looks set to continue this year.

You and your leadership team are ambitious for pupils, including learners in the sixth form. Leaders have created a culture of high expectations for teaching, behaviour and outcomes. Through detailed and accurate information, leaders have formed an objective, realistic and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Leaders target actions to areas that require improvement to good effect. As a result, there have been improvements in leadership, teaching, behaviour and outcomes since the last inspection. However, you are also aware that variation still exists in the performance of some groups of pupils in some subjects. Most pupils at King Charles I School are eager to learn and want to do well. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils look smart in their uniform, which they wear proudly.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your leadership team and governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements and procedures are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Staff who lead this important aspect of the school's work have detailed knowledge and understand their roles and responsibilities well. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet all requirements. Staff and governors receive appropriate and frequent safeguarding training, including how to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Leaders, staff and governors understand what to do if they have concerns about the welfare or safety of a pupil. School records show that, when staff have had cause to act, they do so in an appropriate and timely manner. Strong links exist with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they require.

Safeguarding and related issues are included in the curriculum to ensure that pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe. Staff successfully ensure that pupils are taught to respect views, cultures, lifestyles and faiths that are different to their own. Pupils told inspectors that they feel staff often deal quickly and effectively with bullying issues when they arise. Pupils say they feel safe in school, a view that parents agree with.

### **Inspection findings**

- The school's self-evaluation is highly accurate and objective. Its judgements indicate the clear view leaders have of how well the school is doing and

what needs to improve further in order for it to become outstanding. As a result, leaders sharply focus strategic development on appropriate areas of the school.

- Senior and middle leaders regularly and rigorously monitor the quality of teaching in the school. They use information from a variety of sources, including lesson observations and pupils' progress in their books. Leaders identify that, over time, more teaching is good or outstanding. Judgements regarding the quality of teaching are accurate. Teachers benefit from high-quality opportunities to develop their teaching skills and additional coaching is available if required.
- Governors share leaders' vision to continue to improve the school. They are experienced and receive good training and are well informed about the school's performance. Governors are well equipped to challenge leaders effectively and ensure continued improvement in the school.
- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In 2015, at the end of key stage 4, four in five pupils made the progress that they should in English. Three quarters of pupils made the progress expected in mathematics. Teachers accurately predicted these outcomes. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress was in line with the national average. However, leaders overestimated the numbers on track to achieve this, particularly in English.
- In English, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who made the expected level of progress in 2015 was above that of pupils nationally and above their classmates. In mathematics, the proportion was slightly lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and similar to all pupils nationally. Although fewer disadvantaged pupils exceeded the expected level of progress in English and mathematics in 2015 compared to other pupils in the school, the school's own information demonstrates that current pupils are making similar rates of progress. However, there is some variation at key stage 3.
- Low- and middle-attaining pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve GCSE grades higher than similar pupils nationally. The high aspiration of teachers for these pupils to succeed contributes to these strong outcomes. The proportion of low-attaining pupils entered for a wide range of academic subjects other than English and mathematics has previously been low. However, this issue has been addressed through the options process for pupils currently at the school.
- The proportion of most-able pupils making expected levels of progress and achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, in 2015 was similar to the national average. Most-able pupils in the school achieved similar GCSE grades to pupils with similar starting points. However, the proportion of most-able pupils exceeding expected rates of progress has been, and continues to be, less strong, for example in mathematics. Opportunities to stretch and challenge these pupils in lessons are sometimes overlooked.

- The proportion of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, continues to rise and in 2015 was well above the national average. This trend looks set to continue this year. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate at the end of key stage 4 in 2015 was well below all pupils nationally. More pupils currently at the school now opt to study the qualifications that can lead to achievement of the English Baccalaureate than in previous years.
- Attendance is high for most groups of pupils. However, absence rates have been high for disadvantaged pupils in the past. Leaders are working well with these pupils and their families to improve attendance. As a result, attendance rates and punctuality for disadvantaged pupils are now improving.
- The school's behaviour management system records and celebrates positive conduct, which motivates pupils. There have been improvements in behaviour over time. However, where teachers do not consistently apply the school's sanctions, a small number of lessons continue to be disrupted by low-level poor behaviour, such as chatting and not giving work sufficient attention. This remains a concern for some pupils. Sometimes, inconsistency in applying the school's behaviour policy arises from staff movement between the school's two sites.
- Opportunities to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain have been mapped carefully throughout the curriculum and are accompanied by a range of other activities and experiences. Fundamental British values are reflected in pupils' attitudes and behaviours. For example, school behaviour records demonstrate that where rare instances of bullying occur, these are not related to the use of derogatory or offensive language.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. These opportunities are found throughout the curriculum and through participation in a range of extra-curricular activities. For example, all pupils study and take a qualification in religious education and visit places of worship of different faiths. Pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect differences.
- The sixth form meets the 16 to 19 study programme requirements. Leaders continue to improve the quality of study programmes, for example developing support for learners to obtain relevant work experience that enhances their learning in lessons.
- In 2015, the progress of sixth-form learners on academic and vocational qualifications was broadly in line with the national average. However, based on their starting points, learners made variable progress. Also, learners in Year 12 made more progress than their peers in Year 13. Progress information about learners currently in the school suggests that leaders' actions have effectively tackled some of the variation, but you and your team have rightly identified that this issue remains a priority.
- In the past, the number of sixth-form learners not successfully completing courses has been high. In response to this, leaders have adjusted the

entrance requirements for some courses to ensure that learners taking qualifications in the sixth form have the appropriate grades at GCSE in the subjects they are studying. Learners who start the sixth form without a GCSE grade C or above in English or mathematics are required to follow a course to improve their grade. These courses have proved successful for learners currently in the sixth form.

- The proportion of sixth-form learners who continue their education or enter suitable employment with training is comparable to the national average. The proportion of learners who progress to higher education is higher than the national average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for most-able pupils improve in all key stages by creating more opportunities in lessons to stretch and challenge them
- assessment information is used more accurately to calculate the rates of progress pupils are making, especially the most able
- the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently to eliminate instances of low-level disruption in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we met you and other senior leaders, including the designated lead for safeguarding in the school. I met with two governors including the vice-chair of the governing body.

We joined two senior leaders in short visits to lessons where we spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their work in their books. Inspectors evaluated a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, recent information on pupils' progress and other records about keeping pupils safe, their attendance, punctuality and their behaviour.

Pupils gave inspectors their views on the school when they spoke to us during a formal meeting and in lessons. We also considered the views of pupils through the

58 responses to the online questionnaire. We took the views of school staff into account through the 107 responses to an inspection questionnaire for staff. The views of parents were considered through the 80 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.