Smithdon High School
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1 November 2019

Dear Parents

Following the Ofsted Inspection at Smithdon High School on 1 and 2 October, we are pleased to able to share the final report with parents, carers and the community.

While the school has been identified as 'Requiring Improvement', we are delighted that Ofsted has acknowledged the positive changes that have taken place recently.

We are very proud of our staff and particularly our pupils, they were recognised by the inspectors who said that pupils are 'responding splendidly' to the changes the school is making. The inspectors recognise that the school is on a journey and are confident in the decisions the leadership team and governors are making to bring about significant school improvement.

Please find the report attached. Should you have any questions or require clarification of the comments in the report, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Hirst
Headteacher

A. Gibbins

Mrs A Gibbins
Deputy Headteacher

The Cambridge Partnership
Graduate Teacher Programme

DfE

Maths & Computing

Healthy Schools Norfolk

School report

Inspection of Smithdon High School

Downs Road, Hunstanton, Norfolk PE36 5HY

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	**Requires improvement**
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Requires improvement**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told us that they feel that their school, lessons and pupils' behaviour are rapidly improving. Parents and carers are noticing these changes too. The school is growing in popularity. Pupils new to the school say that it is easy to strike up friendships.

Pupils said that the new headteacher has introduced rules that are 'strict but fair'. Pupils like the fact that adults notice and reward their good behaviour. We saw that very many pupils are responding splendidly. They take pride in their appearance and conduct themselves well.

However, some things are taking longer to put right. For example, a small number of pupils are taking longer to adapt to adults' raised expectations, and some weaker behaviour negatively affects the learning of others. This has been a particular issue in those classes where there has been a number of temporary teachers and changing staff.

Pupils told us that they feel safe. If they have a worry, they are comfortable to speak with an adult. Pupils said that in the past, adults did not always solve issues quickly enough. Pupils said that this situation is improving. They also told us that staff now deal with the few incidents of bullying that occur promptly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Where curriculum plans are clear and implemented well, teachers use these to ensure that pupils know more and remember more in their subjects over time. This is the case in mathematics in particular, and also in English and science. Where pupils are accessing the curriculum more effectively, pupils respond well to well-chosen learning activities and are enthusiastic in their work.

In some subjects, pupils have not been given enough time to cover the full curriculum in key stage 3. Leaders are putting this right, but their work is in its very early stages. In some subjects, plans are not as well sequenced. This means that pupils do not get a strong enough grasp of important knowledge and concepts. In these subjects, pupils are not as well prepared for their key stage 4 studies. We saw examples of this in art, history and languages.

Teachers are developing their knowledge of their subjects and how to teach them. For example, in key stage 4, many teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan and deliver interesting activities. Pupils build on what they know, and produce good-quality work. In subjects where pupils have gaps in their understanding, teachers work very hard to help pupils to catch up. This often asks a lot of both pupils and teachers in Years 10 and 11.

Some parents and pupils are frustrated by the frequent changes of staff in some subjects. These changes have disrupted pupils' learning. The trust, governors and

the headteacher work very hard to fill teaching posts. Despite their best efforts, a small number of classes have had lots of changes of teacher. Where this has happened, teaching has not supported pupils to learn well over time and a few pupils do not behave as well as they should.

Leaders provide well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and learning support assistants typically use effective strategies to help these pupils in their learning. On occasion, often where there have been changes in staff, pupils with SEND do not receive the precise support or resources that they need.

Leaders have made changes so that pastoral care is of a good and improving quality. Pupils told us that these changes have meant that they feel very well looked after. Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to develop their leadership skills through activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils also take on roles as reading buddies and sports leaders. Pupils can take part in many clubs and activities that help to build their character. Pupils are respectful of people's differences. Leaders are rightly improving the careers programme so that younger pupils get the same quality of information as those in upper key stage 4.

The attendance of a small proportion of pupils is too low. Too many of these pupils are absent from school too often.

Governors and trustees are determined to provide pupils with the best quality education and care. Several leaders, including the headteacher, are very new in post. They know what needs to improve and are addressing weaknesses in the school's provision. The trust has put in place effective support. It provides leaders with the appropriate training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils told us that they felt safe. Leaders make sure that pupils are equipped with the knowledge that they need to keep themselves safe from risks that they may face. For example, pupils are taught about the dangers posed on the internet or by those of living near the sea.

Leaders make sure that staff receive proper safeguarding training. Adults are alert to any sign that a pupil may be vulnerable and in need of additional help. Staff report concerns promptly.

Leaders make sure that pupils get the help that they need. Leaders seek and act on expert advice quickly when it is needed.

Governors ensure that leaders carry out the necessary checks on adults who work at, or are regular visitors to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are rightly making changes to the curriculum and to the amount of time allocated to subjects in each key stage. In several subjects, leaders' work to improve the curriculum is at an early stage of development. Leaders need to make sure that curriculum leaders build on their initial planning and put in place curriculum plans that are logically sequenced, delivered well, and enable pupils to build up the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need. In doing so, leaders should continue to be mindful of the impact of this work on staff workload.
- The headteacher has raised expectations of how pupils should behave. Staff, pupils and parents commented on the big difference that this is already making. However, a small number of pupils are not adapting to these raised expectations as quickly as their classmates. Leaders should develop appropriate strategies to ensure that these pupils are well supported to behave well and access their learning effectively.
- Pupil absence is higher than it should be. A small number of pupils are away from school too often. Leaders need to review and change their strategies to increase these pupils' attendance.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143520
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10110185
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Livesey
Headteacher	John Hirst
Website	www.smithdon.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the West Norfolk Academies Trust in January 2017. The predecessor school was inspected in July 2014 and was judged to be good.
- The school has had four headteachers in the previous three years. The current headteacher took up his post in September 2019. Before then, he had worked for the trust. While in this previous post, the headteacher worked with the school and its leaders.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision at this time.
- Leaders gather and take heed of staff opinions through formal and informal processes.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with: the headteacher; several other members of the school's senior leadership team; the special educational needs coordinator; curriculum leaders; teachers; support staff; governors; and the executive headteacher of the trust.

- Inspectors also spoke with many pupils throughout the course of the inspection. An inspector also had a telephone conversation with one parent.
- The subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were: art; English; history; geography; languages; mathematics; and science. In each subject inspectors: visited lessons; met curriculum leaders; met teachers; spoke with pupils; and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons in which other subjects were being taught.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: viewed the school's website; reviewed school policies; met with the designated safeguarding leader; spoke with pupils and with parents; spoke with teachers and with support staff; checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school; sampled records of actions that leaders take when a pupil needs extra support; took account of responses to Ofsted's pupil, parent and staff surveys; spoke with a representative from the local authority; and spoke with governors and the executive headteacher of the trust.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Shan Oswald	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Batty	Ofsted Inspector

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