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Mr Steven Fisher  
Headteacher  
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Kingstone  
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Dear Mr Fisher

### **Short inspection of Kingstone High School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 2018 with Graeme Rudland, 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 2015.

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

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

Kingstone is a welcoming school. Pupils enjoy their education and staff are proud of the school. Parents commented positively about their children's education and about the school. One parent said that their children 'have been supported and encouraged to achieve their full potential both personally and academically'.

The school is a calm and happy place. You have created an inclusive and purposeful environment. You and other leaders have high expectations about pupils' achievement, and you communicate these clearly to everyone.

The previous inspection report identified leaders' relentless determination to drive up standards, reported that teaching was good and that pupils' attitudes to learning were overwhelmingly positive. The report also recognised that leaders effectively used information about pupils' progress to hold teachers to account and to identify pupils at risk of falling behind. These features are still evident in the school.

However, the previous report highlighted the need for the school to raise achievement further by improving the quality of teaching and by ensuring that the work set in lessons is appropriately challenging for all pupils to make outstanding progress. Since the last inspection, leaders have addressed these areas, but there is still further progress that needs to be made.

While some groups of pupils make strong progress, boys and the most able pupils

have performed less well in some subjects. You and your leaders know that the progress of those pupils needs to improve further, especially in science, humanities and modern foreign languages. While you have action plans in place to tackle this issue, it is too early to see any real impact on outcomes. The school's leaders are clear that there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupil groups make the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils are courteous, respectful and willing to talk with visitors. Pupils spoke positively about being part of the school community and about the support they receive from their teachers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of high-quality care and support for pupils in your school and, within this, safeguarding is given particular importance. Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and clear. Staff know their pupils and their families well. They use this information to provide effective early intervention or appropriate support where needed to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Training for all staff is regular, up to date and effective. Identification and reporting systems are robust and referrals made to external agencies are appropriate.

The pupils we spoke to said that they feel safe and they understand whom to speak to if they have any concerns. The school works well together as a community. Bullying of any kind is rare and dealt with swiftly and effectively. Through the curriculum and form assemblies, pupils are aware of the different risks that may face them in today's society. They are helped to keep themselves safe from harm.

### **Inspection findings**

- Senior leaders have worked with middle leaders to make sure that changes have been made to the curriculum in all subjects and across all years. As a result, there is now more challenge and more rigour in schemes of learning. Higher-level work is being done in key stage 3 and a mastery curriculum is now in place.
- As a result of focused training for staff, the quality of learning and teaching is improving, especially in French, geography and mathematics. The majority of pupils benefit from appropriate and effective teaching which enables them to do well. Leaders are aware, however, that, in some lessons, the most able pupils are not being challenged to achieve their best.
- Where teachers plan to a high level, they meet the needs of most groups of pupils, and teaching and learning are effective. For example, lessons are effectively planned in English and French. Pupils' books in these subjects mostly show evidence of good progress over time.
- The progress made by the most able pupils, however, is inconsistent. The school's internal information indicates that most-able pupils are not improving at the same rate as others. This is an area that the school is continuing to work on. Strategies that have been introduced are starting to have an effect, but the full impact on pupils' progress has not yet been realised.

- The achievement of boys is lower than that of girls, especially in humanities and in French. Subject leaders have developed suitable strategies for raising boys' achievement. In key stage 4, intervention lessons at the end of the school day have been targeted to meet the needs of boys and ensure that they make better progress. Senior leaders closely monitor the progress of boys, especially in French. Leaders provide training for all teachers to improve their teaching skills and to help them motivate boys to do better.
- Standards in English are higher than in other subject areas. Work in books and in assessments shows a consistently high level of appropriate challenge and progress over time. Whole-staff training has paired English with less successful teaching areas. As a result, improvements are starting to be made in subjects where boys and the more able could do better.
- The option system, where pupils choose which subjects they will learn in Years 10 and 11, is bespoke for each cohort. It is carefully put together to meet the needs of as many pupils as possible. This contributes towards improving outcomes across subjects. Evidence of progress over time can be clearly seen in key stage 4 books and assessment folders.
- All pupils spoken to reported that teaching is much improved since September 2017, when new approaches were introduced. Pupils acknowledge that many lessons have become more challenging and that feedback from teachers is helping them improve their learning. One Year 10 pupil stated that in challenging lessons, 'we keep going, we keep thinking'.
- Governors are committed to maintaining current strengths and further improving the school, its culture and ethos. They receive good training and are well informed about the performance of the school. As a result, governors are well equipped to challenge school leaders effectively and to represent the needs and interests of all groups of pupils.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve the progress and attainment of the most able and boys are developed across all key stages
- leaders continue to provide a challenging curriculum which enables all pupils to make strong progress, particularly in science, humanities and modern foreign languages.

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

Yours sincerely

David Buckle  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

We met with you, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, and with pupils both formally and informally. We made visits to lessons to observe the quality of teaching and learning, some of which were accompanied by senior leaders. Pupils' work in books and folders was evaluated and we talked to pupils about their learning. The results of inspection surveys regarding the views of pupils, parents and staff were considered. We evaluated school documents, including information about pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the school's self-evaluation and development plans.