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Mrs S Roach
Headteacher
Tudor Grange Academy Worcester
Bilford Road
Worcester
WR3 8HN

Dear Mrs Roach

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Tudor Grange Academy Worcester

Following my visit to your academy on 27 January 2015 with Denah Jones, Her Majesty's Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the high levels of exclusion and absence at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors considered a range of evidence including:

- observations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of students' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with academy leaders and staff.

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

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

Tudor Grange Academy, Worcester, is part of the Tudor Grange Academies Trust. It is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form. It currently has 853

students on-roll in Years 7 to 11. A further 104 students attend the sixth form. The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is higher than is seen nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The large majority of students are White British and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much smaller than average.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' arrival to the academy site at the beginning of the day is calm, orderly and well supervised by staff. Heavy congestion due to roadworks on the morning of the inspection disrupted students' the travel arrangements of and resulted in more students than usual arriving late for the start of the academy day. However, students who were late reported to a senior member of staff in the reception area and efficiently followed the signing-in procedures. Reasons for lateness are carefully checked and assiduously followed-up through contact with parents, and appropriate sanctions are given to those students who are late without valid reasons.

Students' conduct around the academy site is excellent. They are smartly dressed and wear their uniform with pride. Students are respectful of their environment. This positive behaviour is demonstrated throughout the academy site, including the dining area, corridors and social spaces, all of which are litter and graffiti-free. During break times and lunchtimes, students made good use of the indoor and outdoor areas provided for socialisation, where they appreciated time to meet with friends, and sensibly and happily talked. Facilities such as an outdoor table tennis table and areas for playing football and games provide a purposeful focus for students who wish to engage in competitive activities.

Students are well supervised, but they also manage their behaviour well themselves, acting responsibly and maturely. Students circulate the site in an orderly manner when moving to or between lessons, but can, at times, lack a sense of urgency.

The majority of lessons seen were calm, orderly and typified by positive relationships between teachers and students. Students were often attentive, followed instructions, worked well together and on their own, and responded readily to teachers' questions. These good behaviours supported their progress in lessons. Inspectors saw some excellent examples of students helping others with their work and thoughtfully discussing their learning. In a Year 11 English lesson students were proud of the ideas they had formulated in pairs in response to 'Lord of the Flies'. One student enthusiastically asked, 'Miss, we've come up with a brilliant idea about this quote. Can we please share it with the class?'. However, when the work or activities were not well matched to students' needs, or are not made sufficiently interesting, some students became restless and visibly bored. Younger and lower ability students in particular sometimes engaged in low-level disruption such as shuffling in their seats, clicking pens, gazing around the room, or occasionally whispering to the person sitting next to them or behind them.

Students who spoke to inspectors were courteous, friendly and articulate. They were highly positive about behaviour in the academy both in lessons, and at break and

lunch times. They said that high standards of behaviour were set by teachers and there were clear rules to follow. As a result, they felt safe and said that incidents of poor behaviour or disruption to their learning were uncommon. Students unanimously stated that bullying was extremely rare, and not tolerated at the academy. Older students in particular believed that behaviour had improved during their time at the academy.

The academy's pastoral system, in which students are arranged in mixed-age tutor groups and 'colleges', is valued. Students say that this has helped them to 'gel' with other students. Younger students felt very comfortable around older students and told inspectors that older students provided good role models for them. Inspectors also saw how the college system was well used to create friendly competition between different tutor groups, which students said had helped them to develop a team spirit.

The academy's behaviour policy sets out clear systems for applying rewards and sanctions. This policy is well-focused on improving students' attitudes to learning in lessons. Teachers follow policies and procedures consistently and students understand them, so that they are aware of the consequences of their actions. Leaders effectively use the academy's systems to track behaviour over time and identify any patterns and trends which are then acted upon. Regular meetings take place between key staff, including form tutors, college leaders, the achievement co-ordinator, learning mentors, the educational psychologist and educational welfare officer. This ensures information is shared and additional support is put in place for those students whose behaviour is causing concern.

Rates of exclusion in the academy in the past have been extremely high and more students are still excluded than is typically seen nationally. This is particularly the case for some vulnerable groups of students, including disadvantaged students and those students with disabilities or special educational needs. In some cases, these exclusions have been effective and have brought about immediate improvements to some students' behaviour. They are not effective for all students and some go on to repeat the serious misbehaviour. However, the academy is working to reduce the number of students who are excluded. It operates a staffed internal exclusion unit, where students work in isolation from their peers. An intensive programme of support is used for students who enter the academy in Year 7 with complex social and emotional needs. Students who are admitted to the academy midway through the academic year are also closely monitored and receive additional support. The educational psychologist is one of a team of staff who work with groups of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who have been identified as at risk of exclusion. The academy works effectively with other agencies, such as Worcestershire Early Help services, and alternative providers, to provide better intervention and suitable curriculum pathways, for some students, despite a lack of resources within the local area. As a result of these strategies, exclusion rates are beginning to fall.

Improving attendance is a priority for the academy. Form tutors and college leaders regularly review information about students' attendance. Those students whose attendance falls below expectation are carefully monitored by college leaders, and the educational welfare officer. However, these systems have not yet brought about consistent or quick enough rates of improvement. In the first half-term of this

academic year, attendance was similar to that of other schools nationally and had improved upon the previous year. In the second half-term, a sickness bug had reduced this in relation to the previous year. The proportion of students who do not attend the academy regularly is better this year than in previous years, but still too high.

Inspectors also met formally with a small group of students. These students spoke very highly of the work and support that the academy had given them, which had resulted in significant improvements to their behaviour and attendance. They now value their education and were focused on their success in lessons. They also spoke with enthusiasm about the core values of the academy and how this had taught them to be tolerant and respectful of others.

Priorities for further improvement

- Rapidly reduce the use of fixed term exclusions by further building on targeted early support and intervention for students who are identified as at risk of exclusion.
- Improve attendance with a particular focus on reducing the absence rates for those students who do not regularly attend the academy.
- Reduce low level disruption and improve students' engagement in all lessons by ensuring that teachers plan lessons in which the pace, challenge and types of activities are well-matched to students' needs.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Chapman
Associate Inspector