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Dr Antony Edkins
Executive Principal
Landau Forte Academy, QEMS
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Dear Dr Edkins

Short inspection of Landau Forte Academy, QEMS

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2017 with Gwendoline Onyon, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As executive principal, you are leading the school and its community with rigour and determination. You and your staff have an unshakeable belief in the potential of each pupil and each member of staff. You are aspirational for all, believing that every pupil can achieve well no matter what barrier they may face.

You insist that every teacher focuses relentlessly on pupils' outcomes. You give support, training and encouragement to everyone. For example, when you teach, you make sure that pupils are given encouragement and advice which is shared regularly with their parents. You also make sure that you share good practice and ideas with other teachers. Staff appreciate this, and they are following your example.

Aspirations are high throughout the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils who want to become doctors, teachers, lawyers and work in the service of others. Inspectors met pupils who enthused about their arts work, for example the recent production of a Roald Dahl musical of Willy Wonka. They were full of excitement and gratitude for the opportunities you offer them.

Your leadership is shared with the interim senior associate principal (ISAP) Ms Wood, who has only been with you since the beginning of March. Already she has made a very positive impact, bringing a high degree of focus and self-belief to your

leadership team and staff. The ISAP has helped leaders monitor pupil outcomes carefully, focusing on progress and not predictions. This means assessment is linked clearly to where pupils are in their learning, what they are doing well and what they need to do next. Staff and pupils speak warmly of the partnership between you and the ISAP. They recognise how determined you both are to act decisively and thoughtfully, always putting pupils first.

You have had some challenging times in the recent past. You and the interim review board have worked with the multi-academy trust to support staff and to plan a new structure for the leadership of the school that builds capacity for further improvement. You have taken an open and self-critical look at results for pupils in 2016. Although examination results were broadly in line with what would be expected of pupils with similar starting points, you recognise this is not as strong as it could be. For example, you know that mathematics outcomes need to improve and that high-ability boys did not do as well as they should. You have taken robust action to improve this, making changes in your leadership structure, improving the way pupils are assessed and challenging teachers to help their pupils do better.

The school is orderly, calm and well managed. Pupils are encouraged to go about their day in a scholarly and academic manner, keeping their books neat and tidy, focusing on the skills they need next and responding to teachers' comments by improving their work. Even minor aspects of school life such as not wearing coats in corridors are encouraged. You want pupils to see themselves as successful, studious individuals and pupils told inspectors they enjoy this challenge.

Not all pupils respond well. Exclusions were high for vulnerable groups in 2016 but have reduced significantly this year. However, too many pupils are absent for too long, especially in pupil groups likely to be vulnerable such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You are addressing this, and there are signs that attendance is improving.

In the previous inspection report, you were asked to consider three actions:

- You were asked to improve the way in which pupils used their teachers' guidance to improve their learning. This has improved. Pupils' workbooks now have many examples of pupils developing their ideas and skills. For example, in a modern foreign languages class inspectors saw vocabulary being stretched and tense verb agreement being improved.
- You were asked to help pupils get more involved in leadership roles. Inspectors could see how committed you are to this. Inspectors met with pupils who were eager to tell us how their work on the school council helps them feel part of the improvements in the school.
- The report asked you to develop your middle managers. Inspectors could see that now, for example through expanding your leadership team, you are giving more middle leaders opportunities to become more accountable. You are helping staff to become self-critical and improve standards but know that there is more to do to develop the skills of some middle leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is taken very seriously at your school. Both you and the ISAP are trained by experts in safeguarding. You have a high number of staff trained to level 2 and 3 in safeguarding. You keep careful records of any bullying or derogatory remarks made by pupils. Pupils' welfare is at the heart of everything you do. You keep the single central record accurately. You also manage recruitment procedures well. You keep governors informed of any incidents that might pose risks and you manage those risks effectively. Pupils reported to us that they felt safe and know what to do if they want to raise safety concerns.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, pupils made, on average, similar progress to other pupils nationally in their GCSEs. Disadvantaged pupils also made progress in line with other pupils nationally. You were not content with average outcomes. You know that pupils made less good progress in mathematics and that high-ability boys could have made better progress.
- Inspectors could see in books and through other information that progress in mathematics is now good. In addition, most-able boys are now making good progress in subjects across the curriculum. You have trained teachers to raise expectations in their classes. Inspectors saw mathematics lessons where there was extensive problem-solving, for example, and this degree of challenge was appreciated by pupils, and they responded well.
- Attendance was better than national averages overall in 2016. Information on pupils' attendance during the inspection shows that attendance is still better than the national average. However, for some vulnerable groups, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance is too low and too many pupils have attendance below 90%.
- You are addressing weaknesses in some pupils' attendance with urgency. You have used some of your pupil premium funding to improve the staffing for attendance. You have focused your resources for improving attendance on those pupils who need the most support and have found that for these pupils there has been marked improvements. You work closely with the local authority; your staff make home visits to support families and leaders have improved the rewards and pupil leadership culture to make attendance more attractive.
- In 2016, pupils did less well in the English Baccalaureate than they should have done. You have addressed this directly, improving the curriculum in geography, history and modern languages. You required staff to define more clearly the skills and knowledge each pupil needs to improve. Inspectors could see in a geography lesson in key stage 4, for example, how well pupils now understand this. Pupils could talk fluently about the skills needed to be successful in geography, for example analysis and comparison skills.
- You have ensured that the tests and assessments your teachers set are of a high quality. You check testing carefully and rigorously. This means you have improved the reliability of information given to pupils about their progress. It is

part of your clear focus on pupils' outcomes as the most important feature of your school.

- Not all middle leaders have as strong abilities to track, measure and so improve the outcomes of pupils as you would like. You know this is an area for development. You have plans to help middle leaders gain these skills consistently across the curriculum.
- You have reorganised Year 11 lessons. Pupils told inspectors they found this helpful to enable them to concentrate and focus on their learning. You have found that it has helped improve pupil progress. Since introducing this strategy, you have carefully tracked the progress of pupils and kept parents informed and consulted. You are keeping the strategy under review, but inspectors agree that there is a positive impact on progress.
- Leaders have a clear focus on the role played by the arts in pupils' lives and offer a wide range of opportunities in music, art and drama. You believe in performance art and the crucial role it plays in creating a sense of community and purpose in your school. Eighty pupils took part in the recent musical of Willy Wonka and the production generated excitement, enthusiasm and commitment from a wide range of pupils.
- You are committed to spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. Pupils spoke to inspectors of their respect for the attitudes and beliefs of others. There is a strong programme for teaching the values of different faiths. The student leadership programme is evidence of your commitment to help pupils learn about democracy and how they can play their part in society as active citizens.
- Responses to the staff, pupil and parent questionnaire are very positive. You have the support of your community. A typical response comment was: 'My child loves going to school, she is very well taken care of and has plenty of teachers and staff that she knows she can go to if she has a problem.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils improves
- middle leaders improve their skills so they have a better understanding of how to track and improve the progress of pupils in their subject areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Graham Tyrer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors visited 15 lessons and looked at pupils' workbooks on each occasion. Inspectors had meetings with your safeguarding leaders and scrutinised your single central record, a wide range of other safeguarding documentation recruitment procedures, records of actions you take to keep pupils safe and pupils' care plans. Inspectors scrutinised a range of records you keep to track pupils' progress, plans for the school's development, policies, nationally published information about outcomes and an extensive examination of other documents relating to pupils' learning. Inspectors held meetings with you, the interim senior assistant principal, the chair of the governing body and other members of the leadership team, as well as with pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the 69 Parent View responses and free text responses, the 58 pupil responses and the 53 staff questionnaire responses.