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Mr Julian Dutnall
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Dutnall

Short inspection of The Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls

Following my visit to the academy on 27 January 2016 with Ian Wilson, 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 your predecessor academy was judged to be good in 2011.

This academy continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the academy since the last inspection. You, senior leaders and governors accurately and openly evaluate the academy's strengths and areas for development. You actively seek regular feedback from all members of the academy community. When you identify that improvement is needed, you act with speed and clarity. Because of this, the outcomes of groups of pupils who have previously underperformed are rapidly improving. Similarly, subject areas where, in the past, pupils' progress has not matched the best is also rapidly improving. As a result, the academic progress of pupils continues to be good.

Pupils are positive about the academy. Their opinions are important to you. You have meetings with Year 11 pupils to hear their views and analyse the results of pupil surveys. You have identified that some pupils feel less listened to. You and other senior leaders take this very seriously. You have found creative ways to reach out to all pupils and you continue to prioritise this. For example, you have opened a farm where goats, chickens and geese roam. This provides a haven for pupils and is very popular. As one parent wrote, the farm is 'an oasis of happiness, support and encouragement'.

Learners who join the sixth form from elsewhere feel welcomed and able to join in straight away. Surveys of staff, parents' and pupils' views undertaken as part of the inspection gave positive feedback. You take prompt action when feedback indicates

that aspects of the academy's provision could be even better; for example, to improve features of the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme.

The academy is orderly and calm. Pupils say that there is very little or no bullying and that they feel safe at the academy. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the academy site. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils treat the academy environment with respect. The site is litter-free.

The quality of teaching and assessment continues to be good because teachers plan interesting lessons. Teachers generally give clear feedback on pupils' work which helps pupils to improve. Pupils know their targets and the work in their books shows that they make good progress. As a result, pupils do as well as, or better than, other pupils nationally in their GCSE examinations in all subject areas. Sixth form learners also make good progress in their A-level subjects and report that they are very well supported. Pupils say that the quality of teaching is good across most subjects.

You are quick to spot when some pupils do not do as well as others. In some subjects, for example, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as highly as other pupils in the academy. In response, you commissioned a rigorous external review. You have implemented the recommendations of this review as a priority. You have appointed a senior leader to coordinate the academy's work to support disadvantaged pupils. The impact of this work can already be seen. Middle leaders now work closely with senior leaders and teachers in this area. Together they identify the most effective strategies and interventions to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is monitored closely and regularly alongside the progress of all pupils. Current assessment information indicates that gaps are closing rapidly.

Since becoming headteacher, you have significantly improved the way that assessment information is collected and analysed. Regular 'data drops' for all year groups provide up-to-date information on how well pupils are doing. As a result, teachers and leaders are very well informed on the progress that pupils, and groups of pupils, are making. Teachers step in with effective support when required. You have also strengthened the way that senior and middle leaders work together, with regular and structured line management meetings. As a result, all staff focus relentlessly on the progress that pupils are making. Assessment information indicates that current pupils are making good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff have received relevant and regular training on safeguarding. The academy's safeguarding policy refers to the latest guidance from the Secretary of State. Pre-appointment checks for new employees are made and recorded accurately on the single central record. The academy's admission register meets requirements and the academy knows of its duty to report children who may be missing from education. Procedures are in place to make referrals to other agencies if required. Governors

scrutinise the academy's safeguarding procedures and have appointed a governor with specific responsibility for this area.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors openly and accurately evaluate the strengths and areas for development of the academy. This is a strength of the academy. Governors are very well informed about the progress of pupils and groups of pupils. They ask probing questions in governors' meetings. As a result, they hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account effectively. Governors take an active role in ensuring that the academy is robust in its self-evaluation.
- The academy's strategic planning is detailed and clearly identifies priorities and actions. However, planning does not identify the impact of proposed actions on pupils' progress and outcomes. As a result, leaders and governors do not monitor the success of actions taken as effectively as possible.
- Teachers plan stimulating lessons. They focus closely on the pupils' intended learning. Teachers give clear guidance to pupils. As a result, pupils have opportunities to extend their learning, for example on moral issues. Most teachers also use questioning and discussion effectively to probe and develop pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons. Senior leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons accurately and identify strengths and priorities promptly.
- Teachers generally follow the academy's assessment processes. They give pupils helpful feedback on how to improve their work. Some pupils report that not all teachers give them sufficient time to act on the advice they receive, or mark work as promptly as the best. Homework is set regularly and monitored closely by middle leaders.
- Leaders have strengthened the academy's systems to assess pupils' progress. As a result, accurate information is available to analyse how well pupils are doing. Middle leaders work closely with senior leaders to interpret information rigorously. As a result, middle leaders plan effective strategies to support individual pupils within their departments. This helps all pupils to improve and make progress.
- Leaders have accurately identified that the outcomes for pupils in some subjects, for example English, fell below expectations in 2015. This was from a previously strong position in 2014 which followed an upward trend in results. Leaders have accurately analysed the reasons for this dip. They have taken effective and speedy action to ensure that pupils' progress in English is back on track. Recent assessment information confirms this. Leaders continue to monitor pupils' progress in all subjects very closely.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The number of fixed-term exclusions is falling. Pupils' attendance has improved in the past three years, and is now better than pupils' attendance nationally.
- Leaders ensure that the continual professional development for teachers is good. It covers a range of relevant topics. Newly qualified teachers

report that they are very well supported with clear advice on assessment and teaching techniques. Middle leaders echo this positive response. They recognise that necessary improvements to assessment systems have been introduced and report that staff morale is good.

Next steps for the academy

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders continue to provide support and challenge to the English department to ensure that recent improvements in pupils' outcomes are sustained
- consistently high-quality teaching, learning and assessment in all subjects leads to all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, doing equally well and that gaps between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the academy and nationally continue to close rapidly
- strategic planning identifies the intended impact of actions on pupils' outcomes so that leaders and governors can monitor planned improvements accurately.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met you and members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and pupils. I met three governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body. I also met a representative from the local authority. Inspectors visited lessons jointly with senior leaders and looked at work in pupils' books. I evaluated the academy's most recent information relating to pupils' progress, the curriculum and the academy's self-evaluation and strategic planning documents. We also scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, admissions and attendance and minutes of governing body meetings. I evaluated the responses of 85 parents, 146 pupils and 31 staff to the inspection's online questionnaires.