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Steven Piggot
Principal
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Dear Mr Piggot

Short inspection of Fullhurst Community College

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018 with Sally Manz, 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have high expectations and strive to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the culture of aspiration within the school and the local community. Under your leadership, there is a clear-sighted focus on improving GCSE outcomes, combined with a deep-seated moral commitment to serving the needs of the young people in the area, especially the most vulnerable. You rigorously check and evaluate all aspects of the school's work and plan effective actions to address identified weaknesses. Your staff share your vision and work hard to maintain the school's many strengths and improve the school further. Staff value the support they receive from senior leaders as well as your focus on their well-being.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the school. They feel supported both academically and pastorally. Pupils value the school's rewards system, which motivates them to do well. They expressed pride in being part of a tolerant and diverse school community. Pupils cooperate well and are respectful to each other, adults and visitors. Pupils are clear about the link between good attendance and academic achievement.

The governing body is comprised of members from education, the public sector and business backgrounds. Governors are actively involved in the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses well and use their skills effectively to hold leaders to account.

In the last inspection report, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers set work that challenges pupils in English and mathematics. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching. For example, leaders have ensured that there is effective intervention to improve the progress of pupils in reading and mathematics. Leaders consider carefully the effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils in both English and mathematics. Middle leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly. Leaders have ensured that there is a tailored programme of professional development. In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress in English and mathematics was above the national average.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that teachers set homework regularly so that pupils have opportunities to learn independently. Homework is set on a regular basis and develops pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders have ensured that homework challenges pupils. The school's own assessment information shows that this has contributed to an acceleration in pupils' progress.

In addition, leaders were asked to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent from school and to bring overall attendance in line with the national average. Leaders have taken effective action to reduce persistent absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Support is given to parents and carers of pupils who are frequently absent to improve attendance, and to promote the link between good attendance and good academic performance.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Senior leaders collaborate effectively to ensure that a culture of safeguarding permeates the school and that staff are clear about their responsibilities. Record-keeping is thorough, secure and fit for purpose. All staff and governors are trained on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Off-site activities are carefully monitored and assessed for risk. Leaders make sure their expectations for safeguarding pupils are followed by alternative providers, who educate a small number of pupils in key stage 4.

Pupils are provided with many learning opportunities about how to stay safe. Pupils said that in assemblies, tutor time and in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, there is a strong focus on how to stay safe online. Pupils feel safe and are confident about whom to go to if they have a concern. They said that bullying is rare, and is dealt with effectively should it occur.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders' actions are continuing to make improvements to outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, in 2017, disadvantaged pupils made above average progress compared to pupils with similar prior attainment nationally.

- Inspectors scrutinised current performance data, which indicated that disadvantaged pupils are continuing to make good progress in all year groups and across a range of subjects.
- The school's strategy for the use of the pupil premium funding is thorough and detailed, providing for disadvantaged pupils' individual needs through additional teaching, and support for their mental health, behaviour and attendance. Senior leaders and governors carefully monitor the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Where teaching is strong, for example in English, the most able disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because learning activities are well matched and provide appropriate challenge. However, sometimes learning is not structured well enough to provide appropriate challenge. As a result, the most able disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The science department is now more stable after a period of instability in staffing since the last inspection. This inconsistency in staffing has contributed to the underperformance in this subject at key stage 4 in the previous two years. The head of science has focused on the development of teaching and learning, and has introduced sharper performance-management targets to challenge underperformance. There has also been a focus on the development of reading skills within science. As a result, the school's assessment information shows a rise in attainment and progress in science.
- Some science lessons observed had a good balance between practical and theoretical activities. As a result, pupils were involved in learning and behaved well. However, in some science lessons, teachers did not use their knowledge of what pupils can already do effectively to challenge pupils, especially the most able pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils is good overall. Leaders have simplified the school's behaviour policy for dealing with poor conduct. As a result, pupils and staff understand the expectations of behaviour. A new rewards system has been developed and this is valued by pupils and parents, in particular the bronze, silver and gold positive behaviour points. Pupils said that staff manage behaviour consistently and effectively. Consequently, the number of incidents of poor behaviour have significantly reduced for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has led to a reduction in incidents of poor behaviour. There has been a significant drop in the number of pupils who are either at risk of exclusion, or who have been excluded. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has also been a key focus for leaders. Communication between school and home and closer liaison with external support are more effective. Pupils have responded positively to interventions to improve their behaviour and attendance.
- Significant work by leaders has improved the quality and effectiveness of careers education advice and guidance. Governors have provided expertise and links to the local community. Leaders have developed an effective process to bring

together pupils, parents, form tutors and senior leaders to promote pupils' awareness of the importance of careers education. As a result, pupils and their parents have higher aspirations for next steps in education, training or employment.

- Leaders have been tenacious in capturing and analysing data for the numbers of pupils in sustained education, employment or training. The school's actions to promote post-16 courses and employment through stronger careers guidance, combined with the focus on increasing aspirations, are increasingly successful.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use assessment information to set work that challenges all pupils in science.
- tasks meet the needs of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, so that they are sufficiently challenged.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we met with you and other leaders as well as the chair of the governing body. We met with the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and a group of teachers. We met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss views about their learning. We visited mathematics, English and science lessons, in a range of year groups, with a member of the leadership team. We also visited a tutor group and a Year 10 assembly.

We examined a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school development plan, information about current pupils' progress and attainment, analyses of both attendance and behaviour, child protection records and the current pupil premium strategic plan. We also considered 61 responses from members of staff to the online staff questionnaire.