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20 November 2018

Mrs Kirsten Harrison
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Harrison

Short inspection of Chosen Hill School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2018 with Judith Mee and Teresa Hill, Ofsted inspectors, 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since taking up your post in May 2016, you have had a positive impact on the school and you have identified the changes necessary to ensure that improvements take place more rapidly. You provide confident leadership and a clear sense of direction. You are aware that it will take time for the new, aspirational culture to embed itself in the school. You have had to address weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum and there are now clear signs that pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Governors are well informed and provide you with a good balance of support and challenge.

Your self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. You precisely identify what is working well and those areas of the school that need to be strengthened. You have quickly and clearly identified the priorities for the school and have put in place the required actions. You have also identified a range of strategies aimed at bringing about further improvements.

The majority of current pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils have reduced. You acknowledge, however, that you have more work to do to ensure that you help the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to achieve at the very highest levels, especially in the sixth form.

The school has a strong reputation in the local community. Pupils and the great majority

of parents and carers are enthusiastic about the quality of education. They also appreciate the high standards of care and support which the school offers to all pupils, but particularly vulnerable pupils and those with mental health issues. One pupil in Year 10 described the school as 'one big family'.

The last inspection report asked leaders to improve teaching to enable pupils to make rapid and sustained progress. There is evidence that the changes you have made, including adaptations to the curriculum, are helping to raise aspirations at key stages 3 and 4, but these are yet to filter through to the sixth form. Students in the sixth form are not consistently challenged to reach the highest grades. You plan, however, to continue to raise standards where the progress of students is less than good.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are up to date, meet requirements and are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of good quality. You and other leaders, supported by well-trained governors, teachers and other staff, have created a strong culture of safety which permeates every aspect of school life. Staff work well with parents and carers and they are tenacious in their dealings with the local authority, when appropriate, to ensure the safety of vulnerable pupils.

Staff with specific responsibilities for safeguarding take great care to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils. There is a strong, personalised approach which parents and pupils value. Pupils are confident in the measures the school has in place to keep them safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders at all levels in the school have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The positive impact of the actions they have taken can be seen in the progress of current pupils.
- Inspectors agreed several lines of enquiry with you at the start of the inspection. The first of these focused on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' progress overall was broadly average in 2018 but the progress of disadvantaged pupils was below average. The progress of boys, in particular, was poor. You and your team are fully aware of this and a number of significant improvements are now in place. The school's tracking systems indicate that pupils are currently making faster progress. This is particularly evident in Year 11, where progress measures for disadvantaged pupils are expected to be in line with national averages by the end of the year. You acknowledge, however, that there is further work to do.
- The second line of enquiry considered the effectiveness of the curriculum in challenging pupils to succeed. Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils and students are challenged more often so that aspirations are raised. Pupils learn quickly when teachers have high expectations and work hard to meet pupils' individual needs. Where progress is stronger, teachers' feedback helps pupils progress more quickly and pupils of all abilities have access to a range of resources to support their learning. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that teachers share good practice with each other. Staff have regular opportunities for professional development in order to

maintain high levels of confidence and skill.

- The curriculum has been revised this year so that it meets the needs of all pupils more effectively. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy in Years 7 and 8 to make sure that pupils are fully equipped with the skills they need to begin their GCSE courses in Year 9. The new pathway structure has been designed to give pupils access to a wider range of courses and there is now much better information, advice and guidance available to help them make good choices.
- Inspectors looked at the progress made by students in the sixth form. In some areas, teachers' expectations of students are too low. This is reflected in students' attainment and the choices they make when moving on to the next stages of their education. Students are very positive about their experience of life in the sixth form, but they are aware that they could be challenged more in lessons.
- All sixth formers take part in work experience and they have access to high-quality independent careers advice. Those students who retake GCSE English and mathematics do well. Students talk enthusiastically about the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them, including sport, music and drama. They also appreciate the leadership opportunities they are given in school, playing key roles in the house system for example.
- The final line of enquiry looked at the impact leaders and governors have on the quality of teaching and learning in the school. In the majority of subjects, school leaders have been effective in securing sustained improvements. For example, in languages, teachers demonstrate high expectations and provide detailed feedback to pupils about their work. This enables pupils to review their learning and improve their understanding. In some subjects, however, teachers do not plan work that is sufficiently matched to the needs of pupils.
- Behaviour for learning is good. Pupils respond well in class and they approach their learning with obvious enthusiasm. Pupils with additional needs are well supported and leaders work hard to ensure that they are fully integrated into the life of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the positive changes to the curriculum and tracking processes are fully implemented so that pupils of all abilities reach the high standards of which they are capable
- the provision already in place for disadvantaged pupils and students, especially boys, continues to improve
- there is less variability in the quality of teaching
- teachers have higher expectations of all pupils and students, especially those in the sixth form.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Steward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with you and your senior team, middle leaders, and members of the governing body.

We talked to pupils, both formally in groups and informally around the school. We visited lessons with you and your team to observe learning and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding, attendance and the use of pupil premium funding.

Inspectors took account of the 151 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and the 111 written comments from parents. We also looked at the 155 responses to the pupils' questionnaire and the 93 responses to the staff questionnaire.