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11 June 2013

Mr G Salvesen-Sawh  
Headteacher  
Chichester High School for Boys  
Kingsham Road  
Chichester  
PO19 8AE

Dear Mr Salvesen-Sawh

### **Ofsted 2013–14 subject survey inspection programme: English**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 5 and 6 June 2013 to look at work in English.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: meetings with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; observations of seven lessons and drop-in visits to several more. It was not possible to observe sixth form teaching as students were on examination leave.

### **The overall effectiveness of English is good.**

#### **Achievement in English is good.**

- Students work with commitment and determination to achieve challenging targets. They enjoy English lessons and learn well because they have excellent relationships with one another and with their teachers. Achievement in GCSE examinations, which has been broadly average over time compared to boys' results nationally, is improving rapidly.
- Sixth form students are making better progress than in the past because English courses are better matched to their needs and interests and because teaching is better.
- Teachers monitor the progress of all students very carefully. Any students falling into the 'red zone' of underachievement are picked up immediately for extra support. This system is particularly well used to check on the progress of students eligible for free school meals or those with special educational needs. Government funding is used well to provide catch-up

and one-to-one sessions for these students and records indicate that they will achieve well in 2013.

- The proportion of students gaining A or A\* grades on GCSE English courses has been below average over time. This is also now rising, although not as quickly as achievement overall.

### **Teaching in English is good.**

- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong; they convey a passion for English and for reading. They plan lessons carefully to take into account the needs of all groups and individuals and choose materials which will particularly interest boys. Questioning is often exceptionally well-targeted to develop the individual knowledge of students at all levels of ability.
- Lessons are well-paced; teachers vary activities to keep interest levels high. In a Year 10 lesson, students who initially lacked confidence evaluated video extracts of one another making speeches. They confessed that this took some courage, but made much better progress in developing their language as a result.
- An impressive strength of the department is how well students understand how to improve their work. Marking is detailed and informative. Teachers continually share level and grade criteria with students and explain them carefully. The impact of this exemplary practice on learning is very strong: students are respectful and thoughtful when feeding back to one another, even when considering work with significant weaknesses as well as strengths. Good behaviour in lessons supports this process. In some lessons, because students were thoroughly absorbed in evaluating learning and helping one another move on, behaviour was outstanding.
- A level and AS level students talk of being 'constantly pushed' to meet their target grades, and of 're-discovering reading' through their courses. They read beyond the course, explore literary criticism, and share favourite books. They show critical insight when explaining their knowledge of course texts.
- Sometimes students are not stretched enough because they lack opportunities to take responsibility for leading aspects of the lesson, or to work in ability groups where they can challenge one another. When opportunities are presented, they accelerate progress.

### **The curriculum in English is good.**

- English courses and their place within the whole-school timetable are kept under thorough and regular review, to make sure that sufficient attention is given to the development of vital language and literacy skills. As a result of recent review, the English timetable share will increase in September.
- Students are enthusiastic about the whole-school drive to foster a love of books and reading. Sixth form students take great pride in their role as

reading mentors to younger students, through which they have learned more about themselves as readers and as role models.

- Some Year 7 students admitted expecting secondary English to be a bit dull. The reverse is true because lessons are planned with their interests in mind. For example, their books showed how much they enjoyed writing as a gladiator in combat for a topic on 'The Romans' during their first term. In Year 10, exceptionally bright students reflected on the changing role of men in society and wrote accomplished journalistic articles as a result of lively and challenging debate.
- The department provides a range of additional learning opportunities, such as theatre trips, writing competitions and debates. Some students, however, feel opportunities could be more widespread. For example, A level literature students had not seen texts in performance.

### **Leadership and management of English are good.**

- Despite being in post for just a year, the subject leader for English has transformed the culture of the department. It is a cohesive, ambitious team, with a constant drive for improvement. Units of work are extremely well planned and shared, so that good practice spreads and teachers continually learn from one another what works well and why.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching is rigorous. Teachers are expected to self-evaluate and develop their own practice constantly. They are held strongly to account by the head of department, while at the same time valued and supported.
- The subject leader places the students, their interests, well-being and achievement, at the heart of everything the department does. Students know this and value it very highly. One boy said, 'No department can possibly match what the English teachers do for us.'

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- Continue to accelerate progress and raise attainment for all, with a particular focus on the most able students throughout the school, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - adapt tasks and groupings so that they challenge students to think deeply and to speak and write fluently about complex ideas
  - challenge students to be responsible for, and take a lead role in, their learning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely  
**Christine Raeside**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**