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24 March 2016

Mr Robert Campbell  
Executive Principal  
Impington Village College  
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Dear Mr Campbell

### **Short inspection of Impington Village College**

Following my visit to the school on 3 March 2016 with Rowena Simmons, 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 May 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the college since the previous inspection. Your work to ensure that all pupils benefit from 'The Impington Experience' makes clear your high expectations of pupils and staff. Your restructured approach to leadership at all levels is helping to make high-quality teaching and learning more consistent, an area for improvement at the last inspection.

The strong and distinctive features of the college, such as the inspirational performing arts provision and international sixth form, remain of very high quality. Pupils are very positive about the college and feel very well prepared for the next stage of their learning and life. From above-average starting points, a high proportion of pupils make better progress than their peers nationally to attain high standards. This includes strong achievement in English and mathematics at GCSE. Achievement in the International Baccalaureate in the sixth form is similarly a strength of the college.

Although at an early stage, your strategy to use the best elements of the sixth form curriculum to develop the 'Impington Curriculum Experience' (ICE) from Year 7 shows that you are working hard to promote progression. The last inspection challenged the school to improve this aspect of the curriculum. Pupils are now able to make clearer links between subjects and reflect more on their role as learners at the college and as part of the community. Their contribution to the wider world is a question that pupils consider from the start. They leave determined to make a difference.

Your recent introduction of a house system is contributing to greater interaction between pupils in Years 7 to 11. For example, well-managed use of tutor time includes debates about current affairs which draw on the wide experiences of pupils in the form. Such opportunities enable staff and pupils to explore topics, values and beliefs that are pursued in different subjects. Although not all pupils are equally confident about contributing, they are consistent in the respect they show for other pupils' views and feelings. In both tutor time and lessons, relationships between pupils and with staff are positive. However, the high level of skills that pupils develop in specific subjects are not always applied more widely. This includes the exceptional performance skills that a very high proportion of pupils develop at the college. Similarly, the high proportion of pupils from around the world who join the school in the sixth form are given limited opportunities to inspire younger pupils.

Your work to develop the 'inspirational, inclusive and international' dimension of the college is improving as a result of the progress you have made to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. In 10 GCSE subjects you are able to show that disadvantaged pupils are catching up rapidly. Nevertheless, you and the governors are right to make further improvement a high priority. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made much less progress than their peers at the school and in comparison to pupils nationally in English and mathematics. Your pupil progress monitoring indicates that strategies to close gaps are proving effective, including in attendance. These include earlier intervention for pupils at risk of falling behind which is evaluated more rigorously by leaders and governors who are accountable for improvement.

Accurate knowledge of the college's considerable strengths and remaining weaknesses inform deployment of the leadership team well. Judicious use of faculty reviews by senior leaders is also helping to strengthen the capacity of middle leaders. For example, mathematics and science reviews have led to in-depth analysis of the performance of pupils and staff. Challenging targets for improvement, comprehensive action planning and swift evaluation of the impact are contributing to improvements. The use of professional development well matched to the needs of individual staff is also helping to manage performance effectively. This includes leading roles for teachers who promote high-quality learning. As a result, pupils are benefiting from more coherent approaches. Pupils in all years, including the sixth form, are very positive about feedback and marking systems now used across the college. Staff are supportive of recent leadership changes and the direction provided by the Principal.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and vigilant about recruitment, staff training and risk assessment. As a result, pupils say they feel safe at the college and speak with confidence about how to stay safe, including the use of social media. Most parents and carers are confident that pupils' safety is supported by good relationships and positive behaviour. However, a small minority are unclear about the college's approach to tackling bullying. Inspectors investigated their concerns and found that college systems are sound and reassuring to pupils who might feel vulnerable.

## Inspection findings

- College leaders have introduced effective strategies to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The 'Impington Experience' makes high expectations of teaching more explicit. The 'ICE' curriculum provides better transition for pupils between phases of their education.
- The college's self-evaluation is accurate and is well informed by an effective range of monitoring activities, including reviews with other schools. Where expectations are not met, staff receive constructive support. Faculty reviews are managed very professionally and provide strong support for middle leaders.
- Staff are supportive of leadership changes but some expressed uncertainty about plans to expand. Initiatives such as 'professional learning groups' focused on peer review and coaching are proving effective. Teachers express support for the increased opportunities to diversify their approaches to teaching.
- Improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is a high priority at the college. Underachievement by disadvantaged pupils in 2015 has stimulated a concerted effort by staff and governors to help them catch up. Much improved attendance and progress indicates that actions are proving effective.
- Following a focused inspection about pupils' behaviour in 2014, the college has revised its behaviour policy. Exclusions and behaviour incidents have declined. Pupils show many positive attitudes to learning. However, highly refined skills developed in curriculum areas such as performing arts are not widely applied.
- Pupils are very appreciative about the many teachers who 'go the extra mile' to help them do well. They appreciate the additional opportunities provided to address misconceptions or attempt additional challenges. The feedback provided in lessons and constructive comments in books helps pupils succeed.
- Having attained above-average standards when tested at primary school, pupils progress to achieve above-average GCSE results. These include English and mathematics results which are consistently above schools nationally. Pupils' achievements in a wide range of subjects enable them to gain post-16 choices successfully.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability progress very well due to the effective support they receive. High-quality specialist support is based on thorough analysis of pupils' needs. Disabled pupils and those who find learning difficult integrate very successfully into college life.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the college and its work to help pupils achieve well. Concerns about behaviour expressed by a small but significant proportion of parents and carers were not reflected in pupils' conduct during the inspection. Around a fifth of parents did not know how well any bullying is managed.

- The college's safeguarding policies and procedures help pupils feel safe. Pupils are confident that adults provide a very good level of care. This includes the high proportion of sixth formers from overseas who really appreciate the support that is provided to make them feel safe and settled with host families.
- The international dimension of the sixth form promotes strong personal development and high achievement, particularly in the high proportion taking the International Baccalaureate. They speak highly of the information, advice and guidance they receive to help them progress to the next stage of their lives.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the college's work to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is consolidated in order to close the gap in achievement across all subjects
- parents and carers are given feedback about the effectiveness of the college's strategies to promote positive behaviour, including anti-bullying
- pupils' exceptionally high levels of engagement and skills in areas such as performing arts are used to increase their participation and performance across subjects
- the international dimension of the sixth form is fully exploited to widen the horizons of younger pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Regional Schools Commissioner. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection. Meetings were held with school leaders, representatives of the governing body, staff, and groups of pupils formally and informally. Samples of pupils' work from all year groups were scrutinised. Twenty-three lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Ten form periods were visited. Additional documentation was analysed, including reports to governors, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and welfare. Inspectors analysed 211 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 115 freetext messages, 59 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 94 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.