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Keith Williams  
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Dear Mr Williams

### **Short inspection of The Champion School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 November 2016 with Jeffery Quaye, 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 school since the last inspection.

Leaders at all levels and governors are ambitious for the school. Leaders' high expectations and the consistently good quality of teaching over time have ensured that overall attainment is high, particularly for the proportions of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who attain the English Baccalaureate. Overall progress in mathematics has been consistently strong and progress in science has improved rapidly. You have correctly identified that by the end of key stage 4 the most able pupils are not attaining the highest grades of which they are capable in some of the subjects that they are studying, but particularly in English. You have put in place new strategies to ensure that progress for this group of pupils improves, including a new coordinator to monitor and implement strategies to develop this further. There has not been enough time to see the impact of this on final outcomes.

Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their roles. They are held to account for the quality of teaching in their subject areas and its impact on the progress of pupils. Leaders have responded effectively to the need to improve monitoring of teaching as recommended at the last inspection. Middle leaders are aware of the priorities of the school and use these, for example, in monitoring and improving the progress of the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire feel supported by school leaders and the vast majority agree that the school is well led and managed. However, some staff, including middle

leaders, report that there could be more sharing of best teaching practice across the school.

Leaders' work in improving progress for disadvantaged pupils is working well. The number of disadvantaged pupils in each of the lower-, middle- and high-ability groups is often small. The school's response to this is to rigorously track individual pupils and ensure that there is a swift response to any identified issues. Therefore, the range of support given to disadvantaged pupils is personalised: from giving access to information technology to aid with homework, through to very specific tuition in English and mathematics. The impact of this is particularly noticeable in key stage 3 where differences between rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally have diminished rapidly across a range of subjects. Differences have also diminished, but at a slower rate, by the end of key stage 4.

Leaders have also responded effectively to the points raised in the no formal designation inspection in May 2015, by identifying clearly any weaknesses in disadvantaged pupils' skills from primary school. Consequently, Year 7 pupils make very good progress in improving their reading and numeracy skills.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is a strength of the school's work. The focused and regular training that your team provides means that staff are particularly vigilant and aware of risks in the local area. Leaders' actions include surveying pupils to find out how confident they are about staying safe, both inside and outside of school. This informs planning and curriculum development in areas pupils feel less knowledgeable about, for example, female genital mutilation. This means that the age-appropriateness, including for girls in the sixth form, of the safeguarding curriculum is up to date and reflects what pupils tell leaders that they need.

Leaders' work with external agencies, including the 'safer schools officer', means that pupils are particularly aware of external risks such as drugs awareness, staying safe online and gang affiliation. As a result, all pupils who spoke to inspectors and the vast majority of those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire state that they feel safe at school. Pupils confirm that bullying is rare. When any does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Parents are also extremely positive about the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding work. In the words of one parent: 'Sending our son to The Champion School is the best move we've made. He is happy, confident and well balanced.'

All recruitment checks on staff meet statutory requirements. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

## Inspection findings

- Leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They use a wide range of information, including external validation, to test out the impact of the school's work in improving outcomes for pupils. The impact of this can be seen, for example, in the rapidly improving rates of progress in science. You have also worked effectively with a specialist leader in education to help develop an improvement plan for modern foreign languages, where outcomes in French are typically lower than outcomes in Italian.
- Governors also know the school extremely well. They challenge and support leaders in equal measure. The work of the governors' committees shows that governors look at a wide range of aspects of the school's work. Governors therefore talk knowledgeably about the impact of the school's work and what needs to be even better.
- Leaders know what is strong about teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to question pupils. You have also identified that some teachers need to further develop the skill of providing high-quality feedback to pupils, particularly for the most able, so that they are secure in what they have to do to reach the highest grades. This is now a focus of the action to further improve the quality of teaching during this academic year.
- The effectiveness of the sixth form continues to be strong. For example, typically, the proportion of most-able students who achieve the highest grades is well above the national average. This, together with careful guidance and support, has resulted in students gaining entry to Oxbridge colleges. Disadvantaged students in the sixth form typically make the same good progress as others.
- Progress at key stage 4 is typically good. You know that over time the most able pupils, including disadvantaged most-able pupils, make more rapid rates of progress in mathematics than they do in English. Consequently, attainment at the highest grades in English is typically lower than mathematics.
- Most-able pupils told inspectors that teachers generally have high expectations of them and of their work. They feel that they are set appropriate and challenging homework to encourage them to learn outside of the classroom. Pupils stated that the subjects where learning is at its most challenging included mathematics, science and physical education. However, they felt that they could benefit from all teachers giving them more precise feedback on how to improve their work.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. Most-able pupils read fluently and with clear expression. They choose from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils are given regular opportunities to read aloud in lessons. This develops their ability to pronounce and use subject vocabulary well. Pupils of lower ability are developing confidence in their reading skills. Consequently, over time, the reading ages of pupils of lower ability, in particular, have steadily improved.
- Pupils behave consistently well. Areas around the school are well supervised. Pupils of all ages integrate well together. Corridors are calm and orderly. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful to their teachers and visitors. Attendance is high overall. Rates of exclusion have continued to fall steadily, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- The inclusive and safe environment that staff have created at the school means

that pupils and their parents or carers are extremely happy with the quality of education that the school provides. Pupils enjoy school, they enjoy learning and feel that they are encouraged to treat others equally. Parents are clear, for example, that they feel their children are taught well, that they receive valuable information about their children's progress and that appropriate homework is set.

- The opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are very well developed. Pupils in Year 11 were particularly keen to talk about the school's community work, including the 'annual senior citizens party' organised by the sixth form for 300 local residents in the area. Pupils were in the process of making decorations and planning the activities that would take place during the event. Pupils regularly take responsibilities for delivering assemblies on topics including 'anti-bullying' procedures and awareness.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- improve the progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, particularly in English, so that more pupils attain the highest grades at the end of their GCSE courses
- diminish further the differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

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

Yours sincerely

Sam Hainey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

At the start of the inspection I agreed with you and another senior leader to focus particularly on the following:

- the effectiveness of leaders and governors in identifying barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and the impact of pupil premium funding in diminishing differences between the progress of this group and other pupils nationally
- the impact of the school's strategies to raise attainment for the most able pupils, including students in the sixth form
- how effectively leaders and governors implement their safeguarding responsibilities, particularly in relation to the 'Prevent' duty, and the quality of education for pupils in areas such as drugs, sex and relationships.

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, governors, senior and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of the school's work. Other activities included meeting a group of the most able, including disadvantaged most-able pupils, to discuss their views about their learning as well as listening to high- and low-ability readers. An inspector also met with a group of girls in the sixth form and a group of middle leaders.

Learning walks to a variety of subjects and year groups were undertaken with senior leaders. The lead inspector had telephone conversations with the local authority representative and the regional director for the Diocese of Brentwood.

Inspectors considered 234 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, 56 responses to the staff questionnaire and 321 responses to the pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also observed and spoke to pupils at breaktime.

Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation provided by the school, including: assessment information focusing on the progress of different groups of pupils currently at the school; self-evaluation; improvement plans; minutes of meetings; attendance and behaviour information; the single central record of recruitment checks and other information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.