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Jim Owen  
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Dear Mr Owen

### **Short inspection of Winchmore School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 2016 with Joan Deslandes, 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 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection, tackling the area for improvement head on. Consequently, the standard of teaching and learning has improved. Teachers routinely and effectively plan for pupils' needs, including the most able, leading to pupils making good progress over time. Teachers use questioning with skill so that pupils can make good gains in their learning during lessons. They provide most-able pupils with challenging tasks that stretch them appropriately. Teachers use assessment and feedback well to monitor pupils' progress against aspirational targets, and to inform them of how to improve. They provide pupils with opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills across the curriculum, and pupils use those skills with confidence.

Attainment at GCSE continues to exceed the national average, while progress is in line with expectations overall. However, disadvantaged pupils made slower progress than their peers nationally last year. Despite slight improvement in disadvantaged pupils' attainment, you recognise that you could do more to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils make good or better progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case for the most able disadvantaged boys, who, in particular, underperformed last year.

The school's pastoral team works well with support staff to ensure that pupils' attendance is high, punctuality to school and lessons is good, and that behaviour more consistently meets your expectations. You have rightly identified the link

between pupils' attendance and how well they do at school. You have responsive systems in place to tackle pupils' absence.

The school is a harmonious environment where pupils report feeling happy and safe. However, you accurately identify that exclusions have, over time, been too high. Pupils at risk of exclusion are increasingly taking opportunities to improve their behaviour and are supported by new school systems. For example, behaviour panel meetings provide good opportunities for pupils to rectify their behaviour before an exclusion becomes necessary. As a result, internal and fixed-term exclusions are now reducing. However, the number of permanent exclusions remains higher than the national average, particularly for boys. Your analysis of last year's GCSE outcomes accurately identifies how this had a negative impact upon results last year as some boys did not achieve their potential.

The sixth form is popular and growing. The number on roll has increased significantly over the past few years and students on work-related courses do particularly well. However, last year's A-level results were disappointing. You have identified that this was due to weak careers advice and guidance in the past, which meant that some lower-attaining students chose to study an inappropriate selection of subjects. Your work to address this includes a review of course entry requirements alongside strengthening the advice and guidance that students receive in Year 11. Students' performance is now improving, although you are right to demand that the pace of improvements quickens.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies include the latest statutory guidance and staff receive appropriate training on topics particularly relevant to the school's local context. This includes developing staff's understanding of counter-radicalisation, gangs, drugs and child sexual exploitation. These themes also featured in a recent conference for pupils to develop their personal safety. All staff recognise that 'it could happen here', and leaders ensure that staff know what to do and who to seek support from should they have any concerns. The school community is attuned to local risks that staff consider when attending to pupils' pastoral needs. Pupils reported to inspectors that improvements in behaviour in the past year make them feel safer. Instances of bullying are rare and the school deals with them promptly. The school is focusing particularly on cyber bullying, as leaders recognise the potential risks posed to pupils by new and emerging technologies.

### **Inspection findings**

- You demonstrate good leadership through a careful evaluation of the school's performance that tackles further areas for development head on. Leaders recognise that work remains to secure the outstanding outcomes that you strive for and are focused on ensuring that pupils' experience of school is the best it can be.
- Governors are robust in their scrutiny of leaders' work, holding you and your team to account. Governors' good knowledge of the school supports their work

and allows them to probe the progress made in the school's plans for development.

- Effective links with schools in the Pan Enfield Alliance have supported the school's improvement. For example, collaboration with Highlands School is improving the humanities faculty, particularly history. Further work through the alliance is creating opportunities for staff and leaders to develop their skills.
- The partnership with a local special school has improved access to the curriculum for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. This link has also enhanced teachers' skills at supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is now improving. New procedures, including a short-term 'removal room' and higher expectations from all staff, have restored the positive, friendly learning environment that was a feature of the last inspection.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely monitored to ensure that absence does not create a barrier to their learning. This reflects leaders' work, which is improving attendance overall and further securing good punctuality. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, which encourages their prompt arrival to lessons and to school.
- Leaders recognise that further analysis of patterns of behaviour by groups would enhance the accuracy of their interventions. A small cohort of boys have been harder to reach to improve their behaviour rapidly. This had a negative impact on their GCSE outcomes last year.
- The most able pupils are challenged by teachers' probing questioning and well-chosen activities. Particularly effective activities in history, for example, demonstrate teachers' confidence to explore new techniques that stretch the most able and encourage all pupils to aim higher.
- Progress at GCSE dipped last year, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Attainment overall remained good but you recognise that disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able boys, did not do well enough. A range of inclusive enrichment activities and academic interventions support disadvantaged pupils' development. However, the most able boys in this group are not targeted well enough because analysis of their needs is not as precise as for other groups.
- The proportion of pupils gaining the English Baccalaureate qualification is higher than average and improved last year. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving it also improved, but more slowly. This reflects leaders' work to make the curriculum accessible and inclusive.
- Pupils read well and are provided with opportunities to read during the school day. Those requiring additional support to catch up with their peers in literacy and numeracy are well supported and most catch up quickly. The most and least able pupils read with confidence.
- The majority of Year 11 move into the sixth form. The curriculum is well organised so that students seeking work-related opportunities do particularly well. The three-year programme allows students following this pathway to get used to the demands of sixth form in Year 12 before starting higher-level courses in Year 13. Most students move on to the subsequent education, training and employment opportunities of their choice.
- Leaders agree that last year's dip at AS and A level reflects their slow response to the increasing number of pupils joining the sixth form with a wider range of ability than was previously the case. Your actions to address the root causes

have included reviewing the sixth form's leadership structure and introducing new systems of support and monitoring. AS- and A-level performance is now steadily improving and is underpinned by good teaching and learning across departments.

- Students' attendance is also improving in the sixth form, reflecting the work you have done to closely link attendance and academic success with appropriate pastoral support.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- A-level outcomes rapidly improve by embedding the new systems of support, advice and guidance so that students make quick progress from their starting points
- behaviour continues to improve, leading to further reductions in exclusions, particularly for boys
- the most able disadvantaged boys make better progress through staff more precisely meeting their needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Tiplin

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors agreed to prioritise the follow areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- What is being done to improve pupils' behaviour and reduce exclusions?
- What actions are leaders taking to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils?
- How does the curriculum enable the most able to succeed?
- How are leaders raising AS- and A-level achievement in the sixth form?
- Are the school's arrangements for safeguarding effective?

In order to explore these areas, inspectors:

- visited 15 lessons with members of the senior leadership team, scrutinised pupils' work, observed pupils at breaktime and listened to pupils reading
- met with staff, governors, the school's improvement advisor and pupils
- analysed school documents, including: policies and procedures; leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for development; assessment

and behaviour information; documentation relating to pupils' pastoral support; minutes of governors' meetings and the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.