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Ms Judy Rider
Principal
Brompton Academy
Marlborough Road
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Dear Ms Rider

Short inspection of Brompton Academy

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2017 with Sue Hunt, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide determined and effective leadership aimed at ensuring a high-quality and challenging education for every pupil regardless of their ability or circumstance. The caring and stimulating culture you have created encourages all pupils to do their best. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Your staff trust and respect you and your leadership team, and work very hard to continue to improve the school.

Pupils continue to behave well around the school and they wear their uniform with pride. They are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils are proud of their school and take good care of the environment. School leaders have established a wide-ranging and innovative programme of well-attended extra lessons, clubs, activities and trips. These include horse riding, skiing and a very popular combined cadet force. Leaders ensure that sponsorship and subsidy enable all pupils to access enriching experiences. Pupils value the extra activities that support their academic and personal development. Pupils told us that they enjoy school, and this is reflected in their good levels of attendance. Attendance for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving.

The University of Kent provides effective sponsorship of your school. The support provided by many university undergraduate and postgraduate students, who teach

and mentor pupils, has helped to raise pupils' aspirations. This has contributed to the rapid increase in pupils choosing to attend your sixth form. You are rightly proud that an increasing number of your pupils go on to university to study a range of subjects, including one pupil who is now studying to become a vet.

Leaders and governors have addressed the areas for improvement in the last inspection report. Leaders have developed the curriculum to meet the needs of the most able pupils by including a wider choice of academic subjects. Teachers plan lessons to challenge and stretch the most able pupils and, as a result, these pupils now make expected progress. The needs of pupils who attend the Eliot Centre, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are met successfully. Each pupil who attends the centre has an individual curriculum and personal support plan. These help them to make rapid progress in their achievement and personal development. Pupils in the centre are integrated sensitively into the main school and they often join their peers for lessons, social time and extra-curricular activities.

As a result of regular training, middle leaders are now able to monitor and improve the quality of teaching in their subject areas more effectively. Using the more accurate information they receive, leaders and governors know the strengths of the school and where further improvement is needed. Leaders are fully aware of the need to further increase pupils' progress in modern foreign languages, science and humanities. Leaders also understand the need to build on existing work to accelerate the progress of pupils who arrive at the school with low levels of attainment.

Governors know the school well and they share the leaders' determination that pupils achieve their best and develop into well-rounded citizens. Parents and pupils speak highly of the school, and most of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. All staff and governors are trained on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism.

There is a dedicated team of staff who work determinedly, yet sensitively, with pupils, parents and external agencies to help the more vulnerable pupils. Pupils feel that staff are approachable and say that they know who they can turn to if they have concerns. Pupils value the regular reminders through lessons and assemblies about how to keep themselves, friends and family safe.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, inspectors focused on the following lines of enquiry: how successfully leaders are tackling areas for improvement from the previous inspection; how successfully leaders are addressing the relatively weaker outcomes in modern foreign languages, humanities and science; how effectively

the curriculum is matched to the needs of pupils; the impact of community involvement and university sponsorship on improving pupils' progress.

- You have been determined and innovative in overcoming teacher shortages by working with the University of Kent to develop alternative ways to train and recruit teachers. As a result, you have been able to recruit enough teachers of humanities, modern foreign languages and science. These new appointments are already improving pupils' progress.
- Leaders are changing the curriculum to meet the more rigorous requirements of the new GCSE subject specifications and national curriculum. All pupils in Year 10 now study for at least two science GCSE qualifications. Your information about the performance of pupils in Year 10 shows strong progress towards improved outcomes in science by the end of their Year 11. Leaders' information from the current Year 11 assessments indicates that there is likely to be a modest improvement in science results this year. Leaders' current emphasis on vocational education meets the needs of many pupils who achieve well in these subjects. Governors and leaders are determined to retain the vocational subjects, which provide very successful routes into post-16 education and employment.
- Leaders are beginning to take effective action to improve the progress of pupils in modern foreign languages and humanities. Senior leaders expect subject leaders to improve the quality of teaching in these subjects and to swiftly help pupils who fall behind. Recently appointed subject teachers are adding further strength to these departments. The school's meticulous systems for tracking pupils' progress show that progress in modern foreign languages and humanities is starting to improve.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum to meet effectively the needs of pupils who start school with low attainment and poor literacy and numeracy skills. You have identified that because of difficult personal circumstances and disrupted educational experiences, some pupils who arrive with low attainment and without the basic skills may well have underachieved. Pupils are given intensive help in Years 7 and 8 and, as a result, are making rapid progress. Pupils are now well prepared for the demands of GCSE courses.
- Leaders, with the support of the school's university sponsor, have developed an extensive programme of community education. Many parents of pupils at the school attend courses which range from creative writing to parent/carer support 'one stop shops'. Leaders use these opportunities to engage parents in bespoke adult learning programmes to enable them to support their children to achieve.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work already started to strengthen leadership and improve levels of consistency of teaching in science, humanities and modern foreign languages continues
- the current focus on raising the achievement of pupils who arrive at the school with low prior attainment continues so that they can succeed on more challenging curriculum pathways.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, leaders, governors and staff. We spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally. We visited classes to observe learning and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We observed pupils at break, at lunchtime and as they left the school. We considered documentary evidence, including that related to safeguarding, attendance, the progress of current pupils and the work of governors. We took account of 73 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and the outcomes of a staff survey.