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Ms Sue Marooney
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Marooney

Short inspection of Durrington High School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2017 with Deborah Godfrey-Phaure, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your astute and very strong leadership aims to provide high-quality education for all pupils regardless of their ability or circumstance. You are determined in your pursuit of excellence, while balancing your drive with the well-being of staff and pupils. Staff trust and respect you and your leadership team. Morale is high and everyone at this inclusive school shares your ambition that all pupils achieve their very best.

The leadership team has been innovative and highly effective in training and developing teachers. The excellent quality of staff development is recognised locally and nationally. Teachers recognise and appreciate how training incisively ensures that they continually improve their practice. Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they wear their uniform with pride. They are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils who have physical disabilities are integrated into every aspect of school life and involved fully in social interaction at break and lunchtimes. Pupils value and respect the well-maintained and stimulating school environment. Their experience at the school is enhanced by the wide range of clubs and activities provided by staff. These include opportunities for participation in sport, music, art, drama and a number of subject-based clubs. Pupils told us that they enjoy school.

The leadership team monitors effectively the quality of teaching, pupils' progress in each subject and the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result, leaders and governors have an accurate view of the many strengths of the school and the areas which can be improved. You have identified correctly that the progress of the most able pupils, although broadly average, does not match the strong progress made by pupils with low or average starting points. You are swiftly addressing this area for improvement with a range of initiatives to increase the rate of progress of the most able. For example, you are working to increase pupils' resilience and perseverance when faced with challenges.

You have ensured that disadvantaged pupils make progress in English and mathematics equivalent to other pupils nationally. This has helped disadvantaged pupils make a successful transition into college or training at the end of Year 11. You know that the progress of disadvantaged pupils in other subjects is slower. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been well below that expected for some time and this partly explains the weaker progress of these groups. You are focusing rightly on improving their attendance and intervening promptly when pupils' progress slows.

Safeguarding is effective.

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

You have developed a team of highly skilled staff who work with determination and sensitivity to help pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. There is a strong culture of care for every pupil at your school. Your staff work effectively together to identify promptly when pupils show signs that they may be at risk. In these circumstances, a dedicated safeguarding team acts swiftly with pupils, parents and external agencies to put appropriate support in place.

Pupils feel safe in school and feel that staff are approachable. They know who they can turn to if they have concerns. Pupils value the lessons and assemblies which explain how to keep themselves and their friends and family safe.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, inspectors focused on the following lines of enquiry: the achievement of the most able pupils; the attendance and progress of vulnerable pupils; and how pupils in key stage 3 are being prepared for key stage 4 and beyond.
- Leaders identify the most able pupils as soon as they start at the school and teachers monitor the progress of these pupils regularly. The most able pupils follow a highly challenging and academically broad curriculum, with a rapidly increasing number taking a modern foreign language. Teachers expect all of

the most able pupils to persevere with challenging work and, as a result, these pupils are beginning to make faster progress.

- School leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils who are in danger of falling behind are given prompt and effective help. As a result, disadvantaged pupils now make more rapid progress in English and mathematics. However, the poor attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to be a barrier to progress in other subjects for a number of pupils.
- The leadership team anticipates change and plans accordingly. For example, leaders in English and mathematics have adapted the curriculum and teaching methods from key stage 3 to meet effectively the demands of the new, more challenging, GCSE courses. The school's achievement information and the work seen in lessons during the inspection indicate that pupils' progress continues to be strong in these subjects.
- Leaders have adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities and aptitudes. From the start of Year 7, pupils are challenged and supported appropriately with their learning. As pupils move through the school, they are given personal support and guidance to choose the appropriate courses. As a result, almost all pupils transfer successfully into further education or training at the end of Year 11.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities improves so that more attend school regularly
- the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities accelerates in subjects across the wider curriculum
- the progress of the most able pupils further accelerates.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. 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, progress of current pupils and the work of governors. We took account of 134 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and the outcomes of a staff survey.