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Mr Simon Holmes
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Dear Mr Holmes

Short inspection of Melbourn Village College

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2017 with Ofsted Inspector David Davies, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has continued to improve the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your work to ensure that the school's vision of 'everybody is somebody' is evident in the support you provide for all pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. This is evident in the many positive statements made on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Parents commented on the 'excellent standard of education' and the 'very good pastoral support'. Many parents were particularly appreciative of the extra-curricular opportunities afforded to all pupils, saying 'an exceptional aspect of this school is the 'enrichment''.

Leaders, including governors, have worked hard to create an innovative curriculum that truly meets the needs of pupils. Your vision is clear and parents value the ways in which the school offers their children a broad and rich curriculum alongside strong pastoral support. One parent described the school as 'a very friendly, small school where the staff know the students well'.

Governance at Melbourn Village College is robust. The chair of governors leads the governing body well. Governors provide a critical balance of support and challenge. The governing body's breadth of expertise has added momentum to the school's improvement plans. For example, the decision to introduce Mandarin as a language option from Year 7 was facilitated by the governing board's expert understanding of

China and language teaching. Pupils told me that they felt privileged to study Mandarin.

Pupils behave well, both within the classroom and around the school. They are respectful of the needs of other pupils. Pupils are eager to learn and demonstrate pride in the work they complete. They respond well to teachers' high expectations and speak positively of the support that they receive. You have ensured that pupils are able to access a wide curriculum with opportunities to develop a range of skills, such as robotics and computing. Pupils focus regularly on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, both within subjects such as history and the daily tutor lesson. As a consequence, many pupils develop empathy and understanding of the needs of others.

You have accurately identified mathematics and English as strengths of the school. Strong leadership has ensured that pupils make good progress, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In 2016, pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics were significantly above the national average. Additionally, pupils made significantly above-average progress in English in 2016. Leaders have evaluated the heightened demands of the new GCSE examinations and adapted both their curriculum and teaching and learning well. Pupils spoke to me about how teachers across the curriculum regularly 'gave up their own time' to ensure that pupils made the progress they were capable of. You have introduced an effective tracking system that allows all staff to monitor individual pupils' progress frequently and to introduce timely intervention when necessary.

You and your leaders take effective action where you consider improvements are required. For example, as a result of changes to the modern foreign languages curriculum and developments in teaching and learning, pupils in all year groups make significantly better progress. You recognise that there are still areas to improve. For example, you have implemented plans to improve the level of challenge in all subject areas so that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make accelerated progress and attainment. You also acknowledge that staff in all subject areas need to be consistent in the quality of feedback provided in order to promote more rapid progress. In addition, you continue to be vigilant regarding the importance of attendance. You have succeeded in reducing persistent absence, apart from those pupils who have medical issues that require external treatment. However, you have clear strategies which are revised regularly to improve the attendance of all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures comply with statutory requirements. Pupils speak with confidence about the ways in which the school makes them feel safe. Pupils know where to go if they have a concern and are positive that staff will support them effectively. Pupils learn about ways in which to keep themselves safe, both within school and beyond, through regular discussions in form time and lessons that focus on how to deal with dangerous situations.

Pupils can define bullying accurately and claim that it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. School records confirm that this is the case. Heads of house monitor and support pupils' well-being effectively.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust. Records, including the checks made on staff who work at the school, are secure and well maintained. Inspection evidence shows that, when pupils require support, the school acts quickly and appropriately.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve outcomes consistent with other pupils nationally in modern foreign languages at key stage 4 in 2016. You agreed and explained how you and your leadership team, in collaboration with pupils, had reviewed the strength of the languages curriculum. As a result, you have introduced Spanish and Mandarin from Year 7 to improve pupils' engagement and understanding. In addition, you took decisive action to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in modern foreign languages.
- On visiting classrooms and talking to your leadership team, the school's inclusive approach to education became very clear. Having restructured the leadership of support for disadvantaged pupils, staff now provide more pertinent intervention. You have also identified additional pupils who require support, such as young carers. The school subsidises all trips and cultural experiences for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that they gain an enhanced understanding and knowledge of the world.
- Your tracking system is effective in monitoring the progress and achievements of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders act swiftly on this information and ensure that pupils receive the most pertinent intervention. Pupils know their targets well and are involved in their review. Staff are alert to the additional needs of disadvantaged pupils and monitor their progress in class.
- My second line of enquiry was about how leaders are sustaining the strong progress pupils make in mathematics and English. Results in 2016 at key stage 4 were particularly strong. Leaders have accurately embedded the heightened requirements of the new GCSEs in classroom teaching and learning. As a result, my colleague and I observed strong teaching in both subject areas. For example, pupils of differing abilities in English were able to discuss and write with understanding about the language needed for different purposes.
- The previous inspection noted that teaching assistants were not as effective as they could be. My colleague and I observed highly trained teaching assistants who adapted work to match the needs of their pupils well in English and mathematics.
- Teachers' guidance and feedback, both in English and mathematics, are particularly effective in supporting pupils' progress. However, staff in other subject areas do not consistently provide the same quality of guidance and feedback to promote rapid progress. Although the most able pupils, including the most able

disadvantaged pupils, achieve extremely well in mathematics, they do not consistently make accelerated progress in English. Similarly, these pupils do not make rapid progress in some areas of the curriculum.

- I also sought to establish whether the curriculum was broad and balanced. Pupils receive very good guidance during Year 9 in preparation for their key stage 4 options. Every pupil receives a one-to-one meeting with you and your leadership team to review their choices. Pupils in both key stages receive a broad and rich curriculum to prepare them for life beyond Melbourn Village College. For example, pupils can study Spanish, Mandarin, history, geography, construction, catering, psychology and many other subjects. To further enrich pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, you and your leadership team have devised an 'enrichment' programme. Pupils can study a range of subjects after school and take formal examinations in them if they wish. For example, pupils of all abilities study further mathematics, which enriches their understanding of GCSE mathematics. Pupils told me how much they enjoyed studying at the school.
- You and your leadership team are forward-thinking in adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of the 21st century. In collaboration with requests from pupils, you introduced Mandarin from Year 7. You are the first school in Cambridgeshire to introduce Mandarin as an integral subject at key stage 3. As a pioneering participant in the Department for Education's funded Mandarin Excellence Programme, you have provided pupils with excellent language and cultural opportunities. Pupils were effusive in their praise of Mandarin as a subject, and make rapid progress.
- Pupils receive strong careers guidance to support them in their next steps. For example, all Year 10 pupils have a one-to-one interview with a local employer and receive immediate feedback. Pupils told me that they found this very useful. Pupils who study Spanish GCSE have the opportunity to do work experience in Spain.
- Another key line of enquiry was how well pupils are prepared to keep themselves safe. Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They are kind, respectful and welcoming of each other and staff. The curriculum supports pupils' ability to consider other ways of living in the world. For example, I observed a geography lesson where pupils explored urbanisation in Mumbai.
- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved slightly. Persistent absence has improved markedly, apart from that of pupils who have ongoing medical issues. You and your leadership team monitor attendance carefully. It is a standing agenda at all leadership meetings. It is raised frequently in assemblies, where the link between achievement and school attendance is highlighted. As a consequence, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved but is still below national figures.
- My final line of enquiry was about the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a much higher number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities than the national average. Leadership is particularly strong in ensuring that pupils receive the right level of support to meet their needs. For example, some pupils follow the OCR course, Life and Skills, to develop their understanding of the world beyond school.

Dyslexic pupils receive coloured paper and coloured exercise books to support their learning.

- As part of the Cam Academy Trust, you and your leadership team have innovatively adapted the autistic spectrum disorder provision at one school in the trust to suit the needs of your pupils. As a result, the school's inclusive ethos is enacted in every area of the curriculum. The school's ethos, 'everybody is somebody', is evident in the highly tailored provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants are skilled in providing the right level of support.
- You and your leaders have embedded an intensive focus on literacy and numeracy skills for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in line with other pupils nationally in all areas of the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to improve their attendance
- teachers provide more challenging work for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to accelerate their progress in some areas of the curriculum
- teachers in every subject area provide effective guidance to promote pupils' progress with the same precision and rigour as they do in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the course of this inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, two governors and the chief executive officer of the Cam Academy Trust.
- I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school

site. I also met with a group of 12 pupils.

- During two tours of the school with you, I visited each class and observed pupils at work.
- I undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, documents relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, minutes of governor meetings and curriculum plans.
- I considered the views of 82 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views parents expressed via free text.