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Nigel Walker  
Headteacher  
Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School  
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Dear Mr Walker

### **Short inspection of Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 2017 with Annie Gammon, 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 December 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have an ambitious vision for the school's future captured in your view that pupils 'are on an academic trajectory to a future leadership role'. There is wide-ranging support for the school's mission and this is evident in the many positive comments in the staff and parent questionnaires.

The school is a safe, ordered and harmonious environment. Pupils across year groups behave well during lessons and social times. Pupils make good progress because their positive attitudes support their learning in class. The school's work on 'character education' is clearly having an impact, reflecting the chair of governors' view that 'the pupils are our best feature'. The school works effectively to provide a very wide range of experiences to enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal development. For example, sixth-form students support young people who have profound learning difficulties from a local school. Leaders actively promote a 'well-rounded' education that develops the whole child in line with the school's clearly defined ethos. The school's broad curriculum underpins this desire and the high uptake of enrichment activities coupled with strong academic outcomes indicates its success.

Leaders have addressed the key areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. For example, the introduction of an online system that contains information about the pupils has improved teachers' ability to respond to the particular learning needs of individuals in their class. The arrival of a new leader for

English has brought significant changes to teaching and assessing the subject; school assessment data suggests better progress for the current Year 11 pupils as a result. The GCSE outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were in line with or above their non-disadvantaged peers nationally in 2016. Together with your leadership team, you have rightly prioritised ensuring that any remaining differences between groups of pupils' achievement diminish. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is an area that leaders acknowledge must remain a priority to ensure that those pupils make progress at least equal to that of their peers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose and that records are suitably detailed. You, together with your staff and governors, ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils is a priority. Staff follow the school's systems and processes carefully to support pupils' welfare. The school's systems support the ethos that places safeguarding at the heart of 'every day of school life'.

Staff and governors are clear about their roles, and work effectively with parents and external agencies to safeguard pupils. Staff have received appropriate information and training informed by statutory guidance. Pupils report that they feel safe in school. The very large majority say that staff are approachable if there is something that they need to discuss. However, a minority do not share this view and the school should find ways to understand and respond to this issue. Attendance of pupils remains above the national average. Leaders have put systems in place to ensure that any absence is followed up swiftly. Consequently, persistent absence is low. The overwhelming majority of pupils are in school every day.

The school has rightly identified that access to the front of the site needs to be more formally controlled to improve further the safety of the school community. Leaders have plans in place to do this later in the autumn term.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that pupils in key stage 4 make good progress in English. The appointment of a new head of faculty has had an impact in creating a greater sense of teamwork. This has resulted in several aspects of the faculty's work developing in the light of the new GCSE, including the systems for assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils.
- The desire to enable your most able pupils to excel has led to the introduction of setting in Year 10 English classes to cater for their needs more effectively. The enthusiasm and experience of the head of faculty are evident in her desire and confidence to 'lead by example' in responding to the raised national expectations. In the lessons we visited in key stage 4 classes, pupils were unanimous in their enjoyment of the subject and commented on improved teaching as compared to when they were in key stage 3.
- The GCSE outcomes in English improved in 2017, yet pupils' achievement in mathematics remains stronger. Leaders are clear that work remains to deliver a

consistently excellent experience for pupils in English, particularly for the most able.

- We also agreed to check how leaders' actions were improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils as well as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. School data for the last academic year shows that attendance at the school remains significantly above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also above the national average for all pupils, although it remains lower than that of their peers at school. Attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved over a two-year period because of the relentless work of leaders.
- Leaders show a good knowledge of the small number of pupils with lower attendance. Pupils were positive about the support that they received and were clear that the school was challenging them to improve their attendance, for example by giving clear information about how good attendance is related to good progress. Leaders now need to refine further the use of the data available to sharpen the impact of the interventions used to raise the attendance of these pupils.
- A further area we agreed to test was how well leaders have improved the progress of Black African pupils. This was because these pupils achieved less well than their peers in 2015/16. School data for 2016/17 shows that pupils from this group are now performing in line with or above their peers in all year groups.
- When used effectively, online information has helped teachers to target these pupils to speed up their progress. Additionally, inspectors saw the use of targeted questions for pupils to ensure their understanding and engagement in key stage 4 and 5 lessons.
- Finally, we agreed to check how leaders' actions are ensuring that the most able sixth-form students are able to excel academically, following lower than expected outcomes in 2015/16. The students that spoke with inspectors were highly engaged in their studies and appreciative of their teachers' support. In our visits to sixth-form lessons, we saw teachers meet the needs of the most able students, particularly when they used the school's planning system consistently well. Leaders have adapted the curriculum in light of the raised national requirements, for example the expectation that students will now study fewer subjects but in greater depth.
- Students in Year 13 also expressed appreciation of the effective guidance they have received about their future choices. This now includes information about apprenticeships alongside university routes. A-level results for the most able in 2017 were stronger in modular courses than the new linear ones. Leaders intend to develop teachers' understanding of the different demands of the new linear courses further. This will ensure that students receive the most effective support in all subject areas.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is consistently effective in challenging pupils to excel in English at key stage 4 and the most able pupils across the curriculum
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils matches that of all other pupils in the school so that their progress improves further.

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

Yours sincerely

David Boyle  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

We carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, to discuss the work of the school
- held separate meetings with representatives of the governing body
- held informal conversations with pupils, students and staff
- visited 14 classes, some jointly with a member of the leadership team, across all key stages
- analysed a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation and aspects of the development plan; assessment and attendance information; safeguarding information; and school policies and procedures
- checked the information on the school's website
- considered the views of 233 parents who replied to Parent View as well as the views of 361 pupils and 46 staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires.