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Ian Potter
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Dear Ian Potter

Short inspection of Bay House School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with James Rouse, 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 March 2014.

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 a calm, honest and reflective approach to school leadership, which ensures that the school self-evaluation is accurate and identifies what needs to be further improved. Your vision continues to be to improve the academic achievement and personal development of the pupils in your school. Your school improvement plan identifies clearly how you are going to achieve this.

Bay House School is very large school with a very positive ethos and sense of purpose. Pupils conduct themselves well and are typically respectful and courteous to one another. Behaviour continues to be superb.

The experienced local governing body knows the school well. Governors are appropriately challenging to school leaders over pupils' outcomes, the quality of teaching and safeguarding. They are rightly proud of the achievements of pupils at Bay House School.

You have recently created the Gosport and Fareham Multi-Academy Trust and you are building leadership capacity at Bay House School in order to grow future leaders to support schools within the trust. You believe in distributive leadership, and your senior leaders support your extended team ensuring they adopt common practices and procedures across year groups within their 'mini schools'. This is helping leaders to manage and lead both academic and pastoral teams in your school, while developing continuity and consistency across the school to maintain the high

standards of education available to your pupils.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified that some teachers needed to improve how they check pupils' progress in lessons and how they adapt their teaching so that all pupils gain knowledge and understanding. In addition, inspectors asked leaders to focus on developing pupils' confidence and maturity.

Leaders have shared, and continue to share, strong teaching and learning practice and effective use of how assessment supports learning within the classroom. The programme of training for staff has been further enhanced by leaders' effective use of school-based research projects. Consequently, teaching is improving and staff apply the school's teaching and learning policy well.

Most teachers know their pupils' individual needs well. However, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are not recording key information from their lessons and as a result gaps are developing in their learning. In the strongest lessons, teachers use feedback to support pupils' understanding and challenge them to improve further, in line with school policy. However, this is not applied as consistently as you would like it to be.

Your curriculum provides pupils with the foundations they need. They learn well and your citizenship programme teaches pupils about equality and how they can contribute to wider society. Your staff encourage pupils to discuss topical issues so that they become responsible learners who have a moral conscience and self-belief. Year 9 pupils told inspectors that staff are 'very firm on equality' and value everyone's opinion.

In 2016, the overall progress of pupils at the end of key stage 4 was well above the national average. The progress and attainment of pupils in English, mathematics, science and humanities was particularly strong. However, disadvantaged pupils with low prior attainment made less progress in English than others nationally with similar starting points.

Provisional information on the progress of pupils at key stage 4 in 2016/17 indicates that progress continued to be strong in English and mathematics. The majority of pupils made expected progress in most curriculum areas. However, some disadvantaged pupils made less progress than in previous years in English, modern foreign languages, business studies, information technology and performing arts.

A few pupils attend the school's enterprise academy. This is a separate provision to support pupils with complex needs. This provision provides help and guidance, as well as academic support, for vulnerable pupils with behavioural difficulties. The ratio of pupils to staff is low, ensuring that all pupils receive close guidance to achieve academic success and learn how to make the best choices when dealing with difficult issues. Pupils who attend the provision make good progress and have clear career plans and post-16 routes.

A handful of pupils attend a local pupil referral unit. School leaders are in regular

contact to ensure that pupils are attending and their well-being is improving.

Post-16 outcomes continue to be typically exemplary. The provision for post-16 education focuses predominantly on traditional A-level courses. Many external students join the sixth form at the beginning of Year 12. The progress students make on courses at post-16 is very closely monitored by sixth-form leaders. Extra support is provided to students where needed throughout the course. Students who just met the entry requirements excel here and most students go on to university.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders have ensured that checks on staff and other adults in the school are properly completed and recorded. The school's record of recruitment checks is thorough, clear and up to date. School systems ensure that staff do not begin employment until all necessary checks are carried out.

Free-text responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, identified that a few parents were concerned about how school leaders dealt with bullying. A few parents also expressed concern about how the school communicated with parents regarding the actions taken to resolve bullying concerns. Leaders have invested in more pastoral support officers this academic year to work with heads of year. This is enhancing the level of support available for pupils to resolve concerns. Feedback to parents is improving as more staff follow the school's new ethos and behaviour policy. This policy clearly identifies when parents will be contacted. Given the large number of pupils in this school, there are very few recorded bullying incidents over the last two years. Leaders have taken effective action to resolve bullying issues. When needed, they also work with relevant outside agencies to resolve wider issues.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe and say they feel safe at school. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are well cared for and safe at school. Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that it is dealt with effectively should it occur. They are confident about who to go to if they have a concern.

Changes to local health provision have raised the threshold for access to services so there is less support available for pupils with mental health issues. Leaders are addressing how to improve pupils' resilience through tutor activities and the increased level of support available in your well-being centre. Pupils shared with inspectors their appreciation of the support offered by trained counsellors in discussing their concerns.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, attendance, exclusions, progress of pupils in English and how effectively the school is meeting

the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

- You rightly identified that the attendance of some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, needs to be further improved. Your pastoral support officers are now working more closely with key groups of pupils to improve their individual attendance. Emotional and well-being teams are building strong relationships with pupils who have previously refused to attend school regularly. This is beginning to improve the attendance of some pupils for this academic year.
- In 2016, you revisited the school's behaviour policy to pinpoint what was affecting some pupils' engagement in their learning. Leaders quickly identified that too much time was being lost using mobile phones. As a result of changes to the mobile-phone policy and the tightening of other school policies, there was a slight increase in exclusions in the academic year 2016/17. These figures have decreased rapidly this academic year.
- Many pupils join Bay House School with low levels of skill in literacy and numeracy. By the time they reach the end of key stage 4, the majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have made strong mathematical progress. The majority also make strong progress in English; however, some disadvantaged pupils are not making the accelerated progress they need to. Recent changes to Year 7 English teaching, including a Year 6 to Year 7 transition project, are allowing English leaders to identify which pupils need further support. English teachers are now addressing these low levels of literacy in Year 7 and this is having a positive impact on pupils' writing skills.
- You have rightly identified that some disadvantaged pupils make more progress in some subjects than others at key stage 4, while at post-16, disadvantaged students make similar progress to their peers. You recognise that leaders are not analysing which interventions are having the greatest impact and which are not. Leaders need to give greater consideration to disadvantaged pupils who are not meeting their school targets across key stages 3 and 4. Leaders will then be able to adapt the support available to ensure that progress is made in all subject areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- interventions implemented to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils are closely monitored and adapted so they have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
- attendance improves for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body and the executive

board of the Gosport and Fareham Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Walshe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your senior leadership teams and governors from the local governing board. We spoke to a trustee from the Gosport and Fareham Multi-Academy Trust and the headteacher at the pupil referral unit. We met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, both formally and informally, to discuss their views of the school. Inspectors visited a variety of lessons with you and your senior team, including the sixth form and the school's Enterprise Academy. We examined a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, governors' minutes, information about current pupils' progress, including that of sixth-form students, and pupils' attendance and behaviour records. Inspectors considered 212 responses and 194 free-texts to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View; 109 responses to Ofsted's staff survey; and 75 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.