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Mr Jay Trivedy  
Principal  
Wyke Sixth Form College  
Bricknell Avenue  
Hull  
HU5 4NT

Dear Mr Trivedy

### **Short inspection of Wyke Sixth Form College**

Following the short inspection on 15 and 16 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in October 2013.

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

You and your leaders have a clear vision to raise students' aspirations and increase social mobility. This commendable focus, alongside the dedication of governors and staff, has enabled you to maintain high standards and high achievement rates across most of the provision for a number of years. In particular, you and your leaders have ensured that the large majority of students progress to very positive destinations after their sixth-form studies. Your students enjoy their studies, have ambitious plans and are, rightly, full of optimism and confidence for the future.

You have sustained many of the strengths identified at the previous inspection and made some progress in addressing areas for improvement. For example, teachers now routinely and expertly include themes in their lessons to promote equality and raise awareness of diversity. This contributes to an atmosphere of respect for, and engagement with different perspectives, which prepares your students very well for life in modern Britain.

There remain a few areas for improvement from the previous inspection, such as tackling underperformance rapidly in the few weaker subjects in order to improve the progress of students in those subjects and, in some cases, to increase the proportion who achieve high grades. There are also a number of new areas for improvement which need to be addressed, such as increasing the proportion of students who achieve any GCSE qualifications that they may take.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Arrangements for reporting safeguarding incidents are effective and well known throughout the organisation. Records of incidents are thorough and show that appropriate actions are taken in response to any safeguarding concerns. Students are referred to appropriate external agencies if necessary.

The designated safeguarding lead has had extensive training and works closely with other local safeguarding organisations, including the local authority. He is supported by a number of highly trained deputies. He has produced very effective training modules for staff, notably in relation to the 'Prevent' duty; this training is of such a high quality that it is also used by other organisations and colleges. Training and support ensure that staff, including those who are new to the organisation, are confident in managing discussions with students about complex, challenging and sensitive issues.

Students have a good understanding of key safeguarding concerns and practices and know how to keep themselves safe. They have an exceptionally well-informed understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and the risks of radicalisation and extremism. For example, inspectors were impressed by a very well-run session in which students debated the strengths and limitations of the 'Prevent' duty.

## **Inspection findings**

- Most teachers use a range of effective strategies, including student reflection, peer assessment, lectures, analysis of written text, images and film, and debates, to motivate and engage students. Teachers are also adept at lecture-style delivery which prepares students well for university. As a result, the large majority of students enjoy their learning and have positive attitudes towards their studies.
- In the majority of subjects, teachers promote the importance of independent learning outside the classroom. As a result, students develop strong, independent study habits and make very good use of the college library and information technology hubs to make progress in their learning outside their timetabled classes.
- Teachers frequently draw students' attention to subject-related careers. For example, students in film studies learn about different types of employment within the film industry, including marketing, production and design. Teachers also provide many activities that help students to develop the skills they need for employment. For instance, students on GCSE English courses practise writing humorous journalism, and students in geography consider ways of tackling inequalities in access to healthcare. As a result of this regular emphasis on future career possibilities, students see a clear purpose to their studies and have a strong and up-to-date understanding of the many doors that are open to them after their sixth-form studies at the college.
- Students also benefit from very high-quality advice about careers and higher education provided through the tutorial programme and by specialist staff. Many

of the most able and ambitious students take part in well-designed programmes that provide intensive, expert support to help them to fulfil their potential to secure places at leading universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. These programmes also provide good support for students aiming to follow careers in medicine, law, veterinary science, dentistry, teaching and other professions. A weekly programme of very helpful presentations from external speakers and employers, including high-profile companies, supplements the college careers advice to very good effect. The proportion of students who progress to positive destinations on leaving the college is high and increasing.

- The very large majority of students on vocational courses take part in valuable work experience. All students on A-level programmes who need to gain insights into work in order to progress to studying degrees such as in medicine also benefit from useful work experience. Leaders, managers and other staff have developed strong links with local employers to ensure that appropriate placements are available for those students who need them. For example, students who want to become teachers carry out work experience in local schools.
- Students take part in a wide range of enrichment activities, such as a law society and a medical society, that further develop their employability skills and career prospects. Other enrichment activities and a wide variety of trips help students to develop as confident, ambitious, outward-looking young adults. For instance, students take part with great success in many sporting activities. Students recently won the English Colleges Football Association Cup, and the college has twice been named Sports College of the Year.
- The large majority of students on vocational courses, which constitute around a quarter of the college's provision, make very good progress. They produce work and demonstrate skills of a high standard.
- On the majority of academic courses, including A-level programmes, current students are making good progress. However, on a substantial minority of courses, students make less positive progress, do not achieve high grades, or do not complete the qualification. Managers are aware of this, and they have sensible action plans in place to address areas for improvement.
- Most students on A-level programmes produce work that meets the expected standard. In a few subjects, current students produce work or demonstrate skills of a very high quality. For example, students on French courses speak the language to a very high standard with confidence and fluency. However, a minority of teachers do not challenge students to improve their skills and standards of work or to tackle more challenging activities in class. This limits students' opportunities to develop higher level thinking skills and to deepen their subject knowledge. Consequently, a minority of students do not produce work at a good enough standard or make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders and managers do not identify areas for improvement well enough through observations of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all teachers know what they need to do to improve their practice or to inform improvement plans for subject areas. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard.

- Leaders, managers and teachers do not implement actions quickly enough in a minority of cases to ensure that the quality of weaker courses is improved. Consequently, a small minority of students experience poor course management, uninspiring teaching and unhelpful assessment practices for too long.
- A small minority of teachers do not check that all students have understood their learning. In these cases, questioning is directed repeatedly to the same students, while other students receive less attention. Teachers too often use superficial questioning which does not allow students to express the extent of their knowledge. As a result, a few teachers are not aware of the progress made by their students and cannot plan their lessons to take all students' progress into account.
- Leaders and managers have not provided an adequate explanation for the low retention on just under a half of courses, including almost all GCSEs. Too many students leave at least one of their courses before completing their study programmes. Although there are often very good reasons why a student might not be able to complete all their subjects, these reasons alone do not provide an adequate explanation for such widespread low retention.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- students in all subjects benefit from high-quality teaching, learning and assessment that enable them to produce work of a consistently high standard, make good progress and achieve high grades, by:
  - directing managers to identify and tackle promptly areas for improvement in teaching, learning and assessment in individual teachers' practice and in subject areas
  - continuing to monitor the impact of quality improvement plans to ensure that these plans have a timely and measurable effect, and revise them quickly if they are ineffective
  - supporting teachers in all subjects to provide appropriately challenging activities to develop students' higher level thinking skills and extend their subject knowledge
  - improving the ways in which teachers use assessment to inform their planning and to enhance their students' learning
- they identify the reasons for the low retention on a range of courses, including GCSEs, and take effective action to improve retention.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Clare  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors were assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. We met with senior leaders and observed lessons. We held meetings with, or spoke to, managers, teachers and students, and we scrutinised students' work and their assessment records. We scrutinised key documents relating to the provider's strategy and implementation plans, self-assessment and improvement planning, and safeguarding. We considered the views of students through discussions during learning sessions.