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9 November 2017

Mrs Jayne Dickinson  
Principal and Chief Executive  
East Surrey College  
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Dear Mrs Dickinson

### **Short inspection of East Surrey College**

Following the short inspection on 11 and 12 October 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 December 2014.

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

Since your previous inspection, you have worked effectively with governors, leaders and managers to make sure that the college continues to provide a good educational experience for students and apprentices. Senior leaders and governors are clear about the college's strengths and the areas requiring improvement to make the college outstanding. You have maintained the strengths and tackled the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Clear plans are in place to support the few subject areas that require further improvement. Your leadership team have high expectations for staff, students and apprentices. They challenge and support teachers and assessors to improve provision. As a result, the large majority of students and apprentices make good progress.

Leaders and governors have a clear strategic plan to meet local skills needs. You continue to work very well with employers, local authorities, schools, local colleges and local enterprise partnerships. For example, you set up an effective care academy where you work in partnership with senior managers and practitioners from health and social services. This meets the skills and qualification needs of the sector well.

Students and apprentices enjoy being at the college and value their training. The large majority achieve their qualifications and progress to further training, education or employment. You recognise that for a very small minority of students more work is needed to improve the quality of external work experience. This needs to be

better linked to students' studies and career aims. Your work with local employers has led to a substantial increase in the number of apprenticeships. You have recently started work with eight new apprenticeship standards including customer service, railway technician and embedding electronic systems.

Governors receive clear and frequent reports with detailed information about students' progress. They visit the college frequently and know the provision well.

Teaching, learning and assessment remain consistently good but not yet outstanding. A very small minority of lessons are dull and uninspiring.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Managers and staff make sure students are safe and feel safe. Students know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Managers deal with concerns swiftly and strong links with specialist local agencies are used when required.

Governors and staff at all levels have a good understanding of the college's 'Prevent' duties. Staff make sure that students and apprentices know how to protect themselves and others against the risk of radicalisation and extremism. During the inspection, a college tutor and member of the Metropolitan Police presented an engaging session on recent terrorist events. Students learned about the important role they play in the community to protect themselves and others. Staff promote fundamental British values effectively and all students are completing a British values qualification this academic year to broaden their understanding.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and managers quickly identify areas that require improvement. This leads to concerted and usually effective action. For example, managers quickly identified the causes for poor achievement in a level 1 plumbing course in 2015/16. Actions were taken and outcomes improved significantly in 2016/17. The 2014 inspection noted poor achievement for apprentices within the planned timescale; this is now an area of strength. Effective monitoring of apprentices' progress has resulted in a steady increase in the proportion who are on track to succeed. However, apprentices would benefit from greater focus on the mathematics and English skills they develop in the workplace.
- Managers use current data and student information well to plan improvements. Each curriculum area has a quality improvement plan that is reviewed each term. Senior leaders review underperforming subject areas weekly. Course leaders know that they are accountable for the progress and success of their learners. As a result, achievements have improved in the large majority of subject areas.
- The curriculum meets local needs very well. For example, you recently set up a construction academy to meet the growing need for construction workers. Strong employer involvement results in better opportunities for apprenticeships and new qualifications.
- Managers have focused on actions to improve target-setting since the previous

inspection. They identified areas for improvement accurately and put actions in place to start to deal with these. However, the quality of targets for students and apprentices still need further improvement. In a minority of cases, they lack challenge and aspiration. Too many targets are task driven and do not focus on skills development.

- You have introduced a clear strategy to improve achievement in GCSE mathematics and English. GCSE high grades improved significantly in mathematics in 2016/17 and are now in line with national rates. High grades in English declined in 2016/17, but they remain above national rates. Achievement rates for functional skills English and mathematics are good. Students speak positively about their experience of mathematics and English at the college, compared to their experiences at school.
- Managers have effective strategies in place to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Underperforming staff are well supported to improve their skills or they choose to leave. Leaders do know that in a minority of areas teachers fail to stimulate or capture learners' interest, resulting in a lack of progress.
- Improving the opportunities for quality external work experience was a key recommendation from the previous inspection. Good progress has been made on this. The large majority of students now benefit from good-quality work experience or work-related opportunities. There are a small minority whose work placements are not related to their subjects or the skills they need to develop for their careers.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve achievement rates for the small minority of subjects and apprenticeships that are below the national rates
- all students and apprentices are set high-quality, challenging targets that help them achieve their full potential
- all students have high-quality external work experience linked to their career aims and areas of study
- they support all staff to continue to develop students' and apprentices' English and mathematics skills
- all staff promote to students the importance of good English and mathematics skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Hill  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**  
**Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, one of Her Majesty's inspectors and four Ofsted inspectors were assisted by the deputy principal for curriculum and standards, as nominee. We met with you, members of the senior leadership and management team, the chair and other members of the governing body, curriculum heads, teachers, assessors, employers, students and apprentices. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment and reviewed students' work. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents including those related to safeguarding, quality assurance and the performance of provision. We analysed data on students' and apprentices' achievement and progress from their starting points and considered their views.