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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Ashraf Ali
Headteacher
Chessington Community College
Garrison Lane
Surrey
KT9 2JS

Dear Mr Ali

Short inspection of Chessington Community College

Following my visit to the school on 1 May with Rachel Clarke, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since joining the school in September 2015, you and your team have ensured a caring, welcoming and supportive environment where pupils feel safe, attend well and are ready to learn. Pupils behave well in classrooms and round the school. They value the many rewards and are proud to wear badges and ties that reflect their success. They recognise the improvements that the school has made in the last two years and appreciate the attention to their safety and well-being.

Pupils' results have also improved since the previous inspection. Overall progress was broadly average in 2017 and was above average in 2016. Pupils' progress in work-related and optional GCSE subjects at key stage 4 has been well above average for the last two years.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning reflect how the quality of teaching has improved. There is now a robust and well-structured programme of staff training and development. Middle leaders are rigorously held to account for pupils' performance by you and your team. You are establishing a robust structure that identifies what needs to be done to help individual pupils to progress. You have also correctly identified the need to improve further pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly the most able, and are taking appropriate action.

There is a strong sense of community recognised by parents, staff and governors. This extends to pupils who value the house system and school council and enjoy the many visits and trips, extra-curricular clubs, charity events and concerts. The head

boy and head girl are seen as ambassadors for the school and meet with governors to discuss their plans. Governors and your team listen to pupils; for example, the broad range of subject choices at key stage 4 reflects pupils' aspirations and interests.

Your strong commitment to providing the best possible education for all pupils, irrespective of their background or abilities, is shared by staff and governors. You and the governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. The current governing body was appointed two years ago and has used this time wisely to get to know the school well. Governors visit the school regularly, talk to pupils and staff and gather views to support their planning. They hold the school rigorously to account for its work and challenge leaders to improve by referring to detailed information to inform their decisions. This results in a culture where expectations are high and where actions are taken to meet these expectations.

Both staff and parents have high levels of confidence in the leadership of the school. Staff enjoy their work and are proud to be part of the school community. The vast majority of parents and carers who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, recommend the school to other parents. This is reflected in increasing numbers of pupils applying to the school. As one parent commented: 'The school was our daughter's first choice and has very much lived up to all of our expectations.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is given top priority within the school. Safeguarding systems and procedures are robust and fit for purpose. Staff and governors receive regular training and updates and their understanding is checked by the safeguarding team to ensure that all know what is required to keep pupils safe. Concerns are dealt with promptly, with careful and detailed record-keeping; this includes referrals to external agencies as needed. There are regular reviews of any referrals and the school will escalate actions where they do not feel that external support is sufficient or where there is a delay in response. Pupils told inspectors that they can talk about any worries and feel that staff would take action. Recruitment of new staff is subject to diligent checks and governors review these checks regularly. Pupils' safety has the highest profile with the governing body. All this contributes to an environment where pupils' safety is paramount.

Pupils were able to talk about how to keep themselves safe. They described personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions on topics such as internet safety, gangs and knife crime as well as outside speakers on the risk of drugs and alcohol. The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe at school and that bullying is rare.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to focus on how effectively leaders are ensuring that pupils have good attitudes to education and that they are ready to learn. This was because

pupils' attendance, the destinations of students and exclusions were below national standards.

- You and your team have rightly focused on improving pupils' attendance. You have put into place rigorous systems that have led to a rapid improvement. This includes mentoring and intervention by senior staff and a school-wide focus on attendance. As a result of these effective actions, pupils attend more regularly and attendance figures are now in line with other schools nationally, and persistent absentees are fewer than the national average. You are determined that these standards will be maintained and improved; you have rightly identified this as a continued priority for individual pupils and the school.
- Leaders' work in improving the advice and guidance for post-16 students regarding their futures has had an impressive immediate impact. As a result, all Year 11 pupils from 2017 started courses in education, employment or training, including pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Behaviour for learning has also improved as a result of your introduction of a new behaviour code. This has resulted in a sharp reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions. In classrooms, inspectors observed pupils being keen to respond to questions, following instructions and showing a willingness to learn and to do well. Around the school, pupils were seen to get on well with each other, and the atmosphere at social times was calm and orderly. Pupils reported that they understand the new system and they appreciate the improvement it has made to their time in school. They also welcome the additional rewards and prizes now available. All this has led to an effective learning community where pupils feel safe and are ready to learn.
- We next agreed to look at the impact of leaders' actions to improve pupils' performance in English and mathematics. This was because, in 2017, there was a dip in the GCSE examination results for these subjects.
- Leaders in English have wisely built on existing good practice and established strengths. They have strengthened the focus of preparation work for Year 11 pupils to include those elements of skills and context that are now a requirement of the examination. They have introduced greater awareness of language structure from key stage 3, so that pupils build on their work from key stage 2 and develop skills in readiness for key stage 4. Visits to classrooms indicated purposeful teaching focusing on developing pupils' linguistic techniques and formal language. Scrutiny of exercise books showed that pupils' writing skills had improved markedly over time.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities benefit from the effective encouragement they receive to support their learning. Well-considered trips and visits further extend the English curriculum which enables pupils to focus on their studies and become successful learners.
- In mathematics, visits to classrooms and scrutiny of exercise books indicate that pupils are acquiring a wide range of mathematical skills. Pupils are motivated and proud of their work, as their well-presented books show. However, some pupils were ready for more challenging activities. Leaders have recognised this, as well as the additional requirements of the new GCSE examination. They have,

therefore, modified curriculum plans to incorporate more challenge and greater problem-solving opportunities. For example, Year 7 pupils were given a word problem where they had to identify key information and then decide the mathematical skills that were required. Pupils showed perseverance and explored the different approaches that they could take.

- Leaders are providing additional support for key stage 4 pupils to improve problem-solving skills and revise key concepts. This, together with analysis of predictions, means that leaders are confident that their actions will secure improved outcomes for pupils in mathematics, including the most-able and disadvantaged. However, they recognise that the changes put in place are not fully established and that this area will remain a future priority for the school.
- You explained that maintaining your outstanding record in outcomes for option subjects remained a high priority for leaders and staff. Therefore, we agreed to focus on the impact of steps taken, now that the very successful European Computer Driving Licence course would no longer count towards pupils' examination results. In order to maintain high levels of progress, leaders have introduced a three-year key stage 4 with option courses confirmed at the start of Year 10. Leaders explained how this would increase time allocation but also ensure that pupils were on the right courses where they could excel.
- Leaders explained their commitment to work-related courses and the 'irresistible' curriculum. They explained the importance of these courses to pupils, for example experiencing a different style of learning, and providing an important bridge for apprenticeships or college courses. The breadth of option courses offered reflected leaders' commitment to responding to individual pupils' aspirations and future career plans. Leaders rightly saw this as a powerful motivator for pupils and a contributing factor to supporting high-quality outcomes across the curriculum.
- Leaders demonstrated how the new data tracking system showed that option courses overall were maintaining previously achieved high standards. The system also allowed governors to ask challenging questions about what could be even better, keeping developments high profile. Leaders take prompt action where individual pupils needed extra support. Wisely, you have developed partnerships with other schools; this has impacted positively upon staff development and helped to maintain pupils' high performance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in mathematics challenges all pupils, including the most able, to think more deeply about how to apply their skills to support their understanding and mastery
- the substantial improvements in attendance are maintained and improved still further for all groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Allott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, including the headteacher, and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. They visited classes with senior leaders, spoke to pupils about their learning and reviewed their work in books. A range of documentation was reviewed including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' achievement and attendance and safeguarding records. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment checks and considered the school's website. The 40 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, were considered, including 39 written comments. Inspectors also considered 25 responses from staff and 101 responses from pupils to Ofsted's surveys.