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Mrs Debra Liddicoat
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Liddicoat

Short inspection of Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 2018 with Gary Holden, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Simon Beamish, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained a good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your determination to provide high-quality care and to foster the school's values of community, creativity, growth and success has created a caring and welcoming school where pupils and students share leaders' high aspirations.

You acknowledge that pupils' outcomes last year were not as strong as they should have been. Overall, pupils' progress was below that of pupils nationally. Boys, in particular, did not do as well as they should have done. Your determined actions, such as providing training for teachers on improving questioning and on teaching new examination courses, have led to improvements in the outcomes of current pupils, particularly boys. You have made sure that your plans for school improvement focus on improving pupils' progress, and governors have monitored these plans. Governors have challenged leaders about improvements but would benefit from using information about progress more precisely so that they can see the difference that leaders' actions make.

Pupils and sixth-form students are very positive about their committed teachers. Pupils and students value their teachers' expertise and subject knowledge. They explained that their teachers 'go the extra mile' in supporting them. Careers provision helps pupils and students consider carefully their options for the next stage of their education. Leaders organise frequent visits from industry leaders, professionals and representatives from higher education. As a result, pupils and students feel motivated in their learning, being inspired by the wide range of

options open to them in the next stage of their education. Many students are successful at gaining places at university, and for several successful applicants they are the first member of their family to attend higher education.

An area for development from the school's previous inspection was improving teachers' use of questioning. This has been a core part of your plans for school improvement. Teachers have taken this recommendation to heart and now increasingly use questioning to challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and thinking.

The vast majority of parents support you and your staff. They recognise that the school provides a safe and caring environment. One parent, who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, wrote, 'I have been extremely impressed by the pastoral care at this school.' Nearly all parents believe that the school is well led and managed. Parents appreciate the support their children receive. One parent told inspectors, 'I can't speak highly enough of the dedication of the headteacher.'

Your pupils benefit from excellent relationships with staff. These are built upon mutual respect and a strong work ethic. Consequently, pupils behave extremely well. They move around the building and between school sites in an orderly and purposeful way. Pupils benefit from leadership opportunities that help them improve their social skills. For example, pupils can become peer mentors so that they can help support fellow pupils who are experiencing difficulties and need extra support. Frequent visitors from local businesses and charities contribute to a fruitful and varied diet of enrichment which ensures that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding is effective.

You rightly make sure that all members of the school community are aware of how important pupils' and students' safety is. Pupils told inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe, they feel safe in school and they know who to go to if they need guidance or support. Staff know what to do if they are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child. Governors and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

You have made sure that staff are trained well in safeguarding and that, as the school is on separate sites, you have at least one designated safeguarding leader on each school site. This means that pupils and staff always have a designated safeguarding leader nearby. Pupils have no concerns about bullying and say that on the rare occasion it does take place it is dealt with quickly. Leaders have created a safe and respectful culture which allows pupils to be alert to risks outside of school and online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed that the inspection team would explore five key areas. We agreed to look into the personal development and welfare of

pupils, and safeguarding procedures and policies. Second, we decided to investigate how effective leaders had been in improving the progress of boys. Third, we established that we would consider how well leaders had supported teachers to prepare for teaching new courses. We also agreed that inspectors would look into how well governors hold leaders to account. Finally, we agreed to investigate the effect of leaders' actions on the progress of sixth-form students.

- Pupils' progress, and boys' progress in particular, dipped in 2017. You responded to this effectively. You prioritised making changes to the curriculum and ensuring that teachers received training in teaching new examination courses. Teachers' training also focused on teaching pupils with high prior attainment. Consequently, well-organised lessons enable pupils to make rapid gains in their learning. Teachers' precise planning and effective questioning mean that pupils are keen to contribute, have a very positive attitude to their studies and are able to think deeply about challenging subject matter. For example, in mathematics, pupils were able to apply their learning in trigonometry to real-life examples.
- Sixth-form students are supported effectively. Although academic achievement has been below average in the past, current students are making good progress. Teachers' sharp questioning, clear explanations and strong subject knowledge ensure that students have vivid memories of what they have learned. Students demonstrate strong subject knowledge and the ability to understand difficult concepts. For example, in history, students know about the complexities of historical enquiry and of different contemporary views, as well as how the interpretation of history can change over time. Leaders monitor students' progress closely. Extra support is available for students who fall behind. For example, staff 'mentors' support students in a variety of ways, including creating study plans and putting students in touch with outside agencies, if necessary.
- Governors are committed to the school and they frequently visit so that they can monitor the impact of leaders' actions. Governors ensure that pupil premium spending is effective in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This was very successful in 2017. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress was better than other pupils nationally. Governors challenge leaders but do not always use information provided by leaders precisely enough so that they can monitor the effect that leaders' actions have on pupils' progress, and particularly the progress of boys.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of pupils, and particularly boys, continues to improve
- information about pupils' progress is used with precision to identify underachieving pupils so that quick, effective action can be taken when pupils fall behind.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you at the start of the day and discussed your view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. We agreed on the key areas on which the inspection team would focus, and on the activities that we would participate in during the day.

Inspectors visited an assembly and 25 lessons with you and senior leaders, where we were able to speak to a wide range of pupils and students and look at their work. We held meetings with pupils and students from all three key stages and observed behaviour in and around school. I met with governors, and inspectors met with subject leaders. We considered a range of documentation, including safeguarding policies, plans for school improvement, governors' minutes and information about pupils' progress.