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Mr Simon Potten
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Potten

Short inspection of Oakwood School

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 2018 with Emma Phillips, 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 2013. The school also received a no formal designation monitoring inspection in September 2015, with a focus on the behaviour and welfare of pupils.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in September 2015, you have been resolute in your determination to improve the life chances of your pupils by raising standards of teaching, learning and behaviour. Pupils, staff and parents and carers speak highly of the difference you have made and endorse the vision you have for the school. Supported by a dedicated team of senior and middle leaders, you have raised expectations across the school. Staff and pupils have responded very positively. As a result, the large majority of pupils are making good progress across all subjects and year groups.

You have worked hard to win the trust of parents and members of the local community, some of whom previously had a negative view of the school. Owing to strong leadership at all levels and your uncompromising insistence on high standards, parents have gained confidence in the school, and pupil admission numbers are rising quickly as a consequence. As one parent said, 'Everything has gone from strength to strength. There is a well-balanced feeling around the school. Pupils are encouraged to do their very best.'

Since the last inspection, you have ensured that teachers have developed their skills through a well-thought-out programme of professional training. Staff appreciate the

opportunities they have to work together and learn from each other. For example, GCSE results in history and geography examinations have been in the top 20% of schools nationally for the last two years, and you have sensibly used teachers' expertise in these subjects to help others to aim as high. You support and challenge those staff who require further development, and hold all teachers to account through rigorous monitoring of their work. Consequently, there is a large proportion of consistently strong teaching across the school.

There is a welcoming, calm and orderly feel to the school. Posters of the school's '7Cs' (challenge, courtesy, communication, community, consistency, clarity and collegiality) are much in evidence around the building and are frequently referred to. Pupils are polite, friendly and very articulate. They happily chat to visitors and clearly enjoy each other's company during break- and lunchtimes. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to learn, as shown by their rising levels of attendance. The school's pastoral support provision is very effective, and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. For example, a parent whose child has been very unwell said, 'The school has been amazing at supporting my child and me through this time.'

Governors are loyal to the school and are very involved with it. They visit frequently to see what is happening for themselves. They are committed to improving the school still further and have the confidence to ask challenging questions of school leaders. They support you well in tackling the school's areas for improvement, which you have accurately identified. The school's self-evaluation is honest and transparent and links sensibly to the school improvement plan. However, you recognise that actions implemented sometimes need to be more frequently and sharply evaluated to make sure they are working to maximum effect.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have maintained a strong and effective culture of safeguarding within the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that record keeping is methodical. Referrals are made appropriately to other agencies when the need arises, to make sure that pupils get the help they need quickly.

Staff and governors have received wide-ranging training in safeguarding matters and keep their knowledge up to date. Members of the governing body ensure that they follow up any concerns a parent raises.

Pupils and parents who responded to the online questionnaire are clear that the school is a safe place. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and that they feel confident to go to a member of staff if they have any difficulties, knowing that any issues will be dealt with effectively.

Pupils receive plenty of information through the taught curriculum about how to deal with risks they may routinely face, such as through the use of the internet and accessing social networking sites. Inspectors saw examples in pupils' religious

education books of their being taught about the threat of radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- Over time, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have not made as much progress as other groups in the school. Inspectors therefore visited a number of lessons to see these pupils at work and to look at their books. Pupils are making strong progress in subjects such as humanities, modern foreign languages, mathematics, English and religious education. Teachers keep a close eye on these pupils, and the introduction of improved systems for tracking pupils' progress is leading to more timely interventions when pupils are falling behind. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are catching up with their peers, although some of them need to speed up. You recognise that more training for staff on specific strategies to help pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities would be helpful in this regard.
- Leaders are effective in using pupil premium funding to organise extra support for those disadvantaged pupils who need it. For example, some pupils go to breakfast club or have help with their reading. Some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive support with their English and mathematics through specialist online programmes. In-class support from teaching assistants is also benefiting pupils. School leaders can demonstrate that these interventions are helping pupils to make faster progress, but you recognise that sharper evaluation to measure their effectiveness would be beneficial.
- Inspectors were keen to look at the quality of teaching and learning and to see whether the work is challenging pupils to achieve their very best, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. In all lessons seen, pupils were working hard, behaving well and enjoying their learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and have established very strong relationships with pupils.
- Your drive to ensure teachers give valuable advice to pupils about how to improve their work is bearing fruit. Teachers are following the school's marking policy, giving meaningful advice to deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils are responding to this advice effectively, leading to clear progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of pupils and ask them challenging questions to make them think hard. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils discussed data on microclimates and were challenged by their teacher to justify their ideas. As a result, pupils made rapid gains in their learning. However, you recognise that pupils' progress, especially that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, would be faster if all staff followed the school's procedures with equal rigour and had high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Historically, the school's rates of fixed-term exclusions have been high, and inspectors therefore looked closely at standards of behaviour. You have been

clear about what is and is not acceptable. For example, you have not been afraid to introduce clear rules regarding the style of school shoes and the use of mobile phones. Pupils understand the rules and stick to them, leading to a harmonious, orderly and positive school ethos.

- Staff, pupils and parents are clear that behaviour has greatly improved in classrooms, around the building and in the local area. Teachers say that behaviour is managed more consistently and they appreciate the support they have from school leaders to do so. The high visibility of senior leaders is valued in this regard. Staff know their pupils well and are quick to intervene where pupils are at risk of their behaviour deteriorating. As a result, the rates of fixed-term exclusions have fallen markedly, and high expectations of pupils' behaviour are well embedded.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and rigorously follow the school's procedures so that all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make faster progress
- they evaluate actions more sharply to make sure the plans are working.

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

Yours sincerely

Paula Sargent
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with you, other school leaders, teachers, two members of the governing body and a group of pupils. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors and another with a representative from the local authority. We observed pupils' learning in a series of short visits to a number of lessons, and all of these visits were conducted jointly with members of the school's staff.

We scrutinised a range of school documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; the school's improvement plan; safeguarding records; and information about pupils' achievement and behaviour. We considered the views expressed in 172 responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 56 free-

text comments by parents, together with 193 questionnaires returned by pupils and 93 returned by school staff.