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Mr Gavin Thomas
Head of School
College Central
124 Brodrick Road
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Dear Mr Thomas

Short inspection of College Central

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 2018 with Simon Yates, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and other leaders provide pupils with a calm, safe and supportive environment in which to learn. You hold high expectations of all pupils and your 'every day is a new day' philosophy is appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. Pupils are very positive about their school and believe you help them to behave well. They value the support they receive and know that it allows them to gain in confidence and self-esteem. In the words of one of your pupils, 'Teachers care about your feelings.' The strong, positive relationships between pupils and staff can clearly be seen. Pupils are engaged in lessons, try hard and take pride in their work.

You and other leaders are very proud of your staff and pupils. You are committed to 'being a champion for the students'. You have high aspirations for pupils. The belief you have in the pupils' potential to succeed is almost tangible. You have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school and continually strive to improve outcomes for all pupils. The commitment and dedication to improving the life chances of all pupils is apparent throughout the school. Along with leaders, you have successfully ensured that all pupils continue to make good progress. You recognise that the attendance of some pupils is an area which you still need to improve.

The chief executive officer (CEO) and chair of the local advisory board of the multi-academy trust (MAT) are well informed. They visit regularly and know the school very well. They, too, share your passion and commitment to achieving the best

possible outcomes for pupils. Members of the local advisory board confidently offer challenge and provide support to you and other leaders. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and value your in-depth understanding of their children. When asked about the school, one parent stated, 'I can't fault it, it's wicked!'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements in the school are fit for purpose. Records are thorough and detailed. Your staff have a very strong understanding of each pupil's individual, holistic needs and a thorough knowledge of their personal circumstances. One pupil told us, 'They know about our background stories.' Staff are fully aware of the potential issues and risks that pupils may encounter and, as a result, are sensitive to changes in pupils and vigilant.

You have effective communication systems within the school, including between the different sites, with different provisions and with outside agencies. These systems help to make sure that any concerns are identified and acted upon quickly so that pupils remain safe.

This is a caring school in which pupils feel safe and secure and have a good level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. You make sure that lessons are interesting, motivating and designed to meet the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and find the curriculum engaging. They understand the work and are keen to take part in different activities. Pupils who have previously found activities, such as group discussions, difficult are keen to take part and have their voice heard.
- Along with other leaders, you have devised a variety of comprehensive systems to track the progress that pupils make in different areas. You use this information effectively to ensure that all pupils reach their potential, and to inform your school development planning. Leaders are continually thinking of new ways to help achieve the attendance of some pupils and this continues to be a rightful and important priority.
- The curriculum offered to pupils is broad and varied. Older pupils have the possibility of vocational learning and work experience, alongside studying for their accredited courses. They enjoy studying their chosen options and feel that the school helps to prepare them for the future. Staff believe that qualifications will 'give pupils the currency to succeed', and all pupils are encouraged to try their best. As a result, they work hard and many pupils leave Year 11 with a range of qualifications.
- Pupils generally behave very well. Staff are skilled at dealing effectively with any challenging behaviour, resulting in incidents being kept to a minimum. When incidents do occur, leaders are insightful and reflective. As a result, the number of incidents of challenging behaviour has greatly reduced over the last year.

Pupils appreciate the calm, supportive approach of staff and the opportunities they are given to resolve any problems, should they arise. The school's 'engagement indicators' successfully keep pupils motivated and help them to manage their own behaviour effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance continues to be the main focus; strategies, including those currently being used effectively, should be used to ensure that attendance figures continue to improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The SABDEN multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maxine McDonald-Taylor
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and other leaders. We visited lessons on four different sites with the deputy headteachers, and observed learning in a range of subjects. We spoke to some pupils in class and looked through their work. We held meetings with key staff about: behaviour systems; the monitoring of pupils' progress; the curriculum and accreditations; opportunities for pupils after Year 11; and safeguarding. We also spoke with pupils during lunchtime to hear their views about the school. We met with the chair of the local advisory board, who is also the chair of trustees, and spoke with the school's external adviser. We considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and telephoned a number of parents to hear their views. We scrutinised a range of the school's documentation and a selection of pupils' work.