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4 April 2019

Mr Mark Anstiss
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Dear Mr Anstiss

Short inspection of Felpham Community College

Following my visit to the school on 26 March 2019 with Steve Baker and Anne Cullum, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 January 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your principled leadership has ensured that pupils benefit from a well-rounded education and strong pastoral care. You and your highly effective leadership team are determined to provide high-quality education for all your pupils, regardless of their circumstances or ability. There is a stimulating and challenging ethos in the school, which enables pupils to make strong progress and achieve well. Morale is high at your inclusive school, and everyone shares your determination to provide the best for each pupil.

Pupils continue to behave well at the school. Typically, they are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and during breaktimes. Inspectors saw pupils working hard in lessons and persevering with difficult topics. Most pupils present their work carefully and respond effectively to teachers' guidance. The relatively new behaviour management system is well understood by pupils and staff alike and has brought about improvement in nearly all pupils' behaviour. You are now working to improve the behaviour of the very small minority of pupils who find it difficult to conform to your high expectations.

Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and appreciate the wide range of clubs and activities on offer. Most pupils attend regularly, and leaders are tenacious in supporting the few pupils whose attendance needs to improve. Leaders, including governors, ensure that pupils' views are included in plans to improve the school. For

example, pupils' subject preferences have been included in the key stage 4 curriculum. As a result, the school has deservedly been awarded the 'Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award'. A pupil, voicing the opinions of a group of pupils, said, 'This is a really good place to learn. The teachers are really nice people and always willing to help.'

Since the last inspection, leaders have developed meticulous systems to track pupils' progress at key stages 3 and 4. This ensures that any pupil at risk of falling behind is quickly spotted. A wide range of effective additional help is then provided to help pupils until their progress matches the strong rates of progress of other pupils in the school with similar starting points. You are now rightly introducing the same careful monitoring of students' progress in the sixth form. However, your focus goes beyond ensuring that pupils leave with good examination results. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their mental health, have a high priority and are well provided for at your school.

Leaders monitor the quality of teaching carefully and check how well it contributes to strong progress. You, together with senior leaders and governors, have an accurate view of the many strengths of the school and where improvement is possible. For example, you know that most pupils continue to make strong progress in mathematics and science. You also recognise that further improvement is possible in geography and history.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school, and most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to other parents. Parents commented that teachers help their children settle into the school quickly, so that they enjoy school.

Governors provide strong challenge and support to you and other leaders. They visit the school regularly, meet with groups of pupils and analyse pupils' achievement thoroughly. As a result, they have a very good understanding of the school's many strengths and where further improvement is possible, such as the progress students make in the sixth form. Governors share with you a desire to listen carefully to the views of pupils. They take a professional and reflective approach to their roles. For example, they evaluate the effectiveness of their work and ensure that governors are appropriately trained.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed, up to date and of a high quality. Before appointing staff, leaders rigorously carry out all the required employment checks. All staff and governors are trained effectively on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism.

A dedicated and highly skilled team of staff work with determination and sensitivity alongside pupils, parents and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. All staff closely monitor their welfare.

Pupils appreciate the concern that staff members have for their welfare and well-being. Posters displayed around the school remind pupils how to stay safe. Pupils told inspectors that staff are approachable.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for managing their own safety. Pupils said that they learn about how to keep safe, including staying safe online, and the importance of respecting the rights of others. Leaders are rightly planning activities to develop further pupils' understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on the following lines of enquiry: how effectively leaders are improving pupils' attendance, how effectively leaders are improving students' achievement in the sixth form and whether pupils' progress at key stage 3 and 4 is now more consistent.
- Leaders have been determined to improve pupils' attendance. The school now has a team of staff who work effectively with pupils whose attendance needs to improve. Leaders extend helpful support to the families of pupils with poor attendance. Every effort is made to encourage and welcome pupils who have been absent when they return to school. As a result, overall attendance now matches the national average and the attendance of pupils who are disadvantaged is improving very rapidly. However, leaders are not complacent and recognise that they need to continue their efforts, so that these improvements are consolidated.
- The sixth form provides a safe and caring environment for students. However, you recognise that until recently the progress of students in the sixth form has been too variable and not strong enough. In response, leaders have improved the curriculum by introducing more vocational subjects. As a result, the current curriculum is better matched to students' abilities. Students' progress is now monitored regularly so that if there are gaps in a student's progress, teachers can give prompt and effective help. There is ongoing appropriate training for teachers to improve the quality of teaching in the sixth form. There is evidence that leaders' efforts to improve achievement in the sixth form are beginning to be effective. Leaders' current credible assessment information, the work we saw in lessons and students' folders show that students now make stronger progress across a wide range of subjects.
- You thoroughly analysed 2018 GCSE results and correctly identified that the slight drop in overall achievement was mainly attributable to disappointing geography and history results. You have resolved staffing difficulties in geography and history and you now judge correctly that you have stronger teaching in both subjects. Leaders' current credible assessments and the work inspectors saw in books and lessons show that pupils now make better progress in geography and history.
- You have developed effective approaches to training and developing teachers' skills. This training helps teachers plan effectively for the needs of pupils of

varying abilities. During the inspection, we were able to affirm your evaluation that this approach is beginning to improve pupils' progress, particularly the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils now make consistently strong progress in most subjects in key stages 3 and 4.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' achievement in geography and history continues to improve
- students' achievement in the sixth form improves
- the current improvements in pupils' attendance are maintained.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, leaders, governors and groups of pupils, both formally and informally. We visited lessons, accompanied by senior leaders, to observe pupils' learning and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and considered documents about safeguarding, attendance, current pupils' progress and governors' work. The outcomes of a pupil questionnaire, the staff survey and 174 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were also considered.