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Mr Edward Rodriguez  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Rodriguez

### **Short inspection of Oathall Community College**

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2018 with Debbie Godfrey-Phaure, 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 October 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Supported well by governors, you have rightly restructured the senior- and middle-leadership teams since the last inspection. You are sharing leadership responsibility, and middle leaders are held to account more closely for pupils' outcomes. Leaders are effective in supporting teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning through precisely focused professional development. You and your staff understand the key priorities for improving the school further.

As a result of the work you and your team have put in since the last inspection, standards have been maintained. In 2017, GCSE results showed that pupils made progress in line with that of their peers nationally overall. They performed particularly well in mathematics and humanities, their rates of progress being significantly above the average. Leaders set challenging targets for pupils to achieve. The majority of pupils are achieving their target grades.

On the whole, parents and carers are very positive about the school, particularly the support provided by staff. As one parent who replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire said, 'I feel that the teaching staff at Oathall really know my children well and know how to bring out the best in them.'

Leaders have recently revised the school's behaviour policy and procedures to

ensure a more consistent approach. As a result, the number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced. Inspectors found the pupils to be courteous and polite. The vast majority of pupils move sensibly around the school site and behave well in lessons.

At the last inspection, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities was identified as an area for improvement. This you have achieved. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that effective support is in place for these pupils. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are provided with a learning mentor, who ensures that these pupils are supported well to attend school regularly and to be successful in their learning.

You were asked to ensure that teaching is well planned so that all pupils' learning needs are met. Leaders have been effective in maintaining the good progress made by pupils. Progress is particularly strong in mathematics and for the most able pupils. You have rightly identified that disadvantaged pupils are not making as much progress as other pupils in the school. You recognise that their poor attendance is impacting on their progress and you have identified improving their attendance as a key priority.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe, including the recruitment of suitable staff, are rigorous. The link governor for safeguarding routinely checks safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they are compliant. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors are appropriately trained. Recent improvements to the school site have ensured that access to the school is more secure.

The overwhelming majority of pupils reported that they feel safe in all areas of the school. Parents and carers agree that the school keeps pupils safe. Through assemblies and the tutor programme, leaders have ensured that pupils understand and manage risks they might face. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves safe online, and they are aware of the danger of sexting and the risks from grooming. Pupils reported that bullying is infrequent, but that staff deal with it effectively when it occurs.

Leaders have established a new house system for pastoral support that has increased the school's capacity to support pupils. As a result, the more vulnerable pupils are supported sensitively, particularly those who are anxious or suffer from mental health difficulties.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, the inspection team looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the progress made by disadvantaged pupils; the variations in the outcomes between subjects; and the challenge that governors provide to the school.

- You rightly identify in your evaluation of the school that in 2017 the progress of disadvantaged pupils was well below that of other pupils in the school and nationally. You brought in a range of approaches, such as mentoring, to support these pupils. As yet, the approaches have had limited impact in key stage 4. However, in key stage 3 you have raised the profile of disadvantaged pupils with staff and have ensured that they have taken action. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is now closer to that of other pupils in the school by the end of key stage 3. This success now needs to be shared at key stage 4.
- You recognise that disadvantaged pupils' attendance is well below that of other pupils nationally. There are gaps in disadvantaged pupils' work due to their absences, and so they have difficulty in keeping up with other pupils. You have not ensured that a whole-school plan is in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly.
- You have set out eight clear principles for teachers to follow in their teaching and learning, the 'Oathall 8'. Although your recent actions to encourage the sharing of good practice have led to a positive impact in helping teachers to improve their skills, not all teachers are consistent in following your expectations. As a result, variations in the quality of teaching and learning between subjects remain.
- In mathematics, pupils grapple purposefully to solve mathematical problems, often with useful real-life examples. Most-able pupils in mathematics are provided with opportunities to deepen their comprehension of the subject. For example, pupils in Year 10 were challenged to work out the formula for the perimeter length of a polygon, leading to their gaining an understanding of the derivation of Pi.
- You have identified that, in recent years, pupils' progress in modern foreign languages has been weaker than in other subjects. Challenges with recruitment have made securing good progress for pupils difficult. Leaders recognise that there is further work to do to ensure that teaching consistently provides challenge for all pupils.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The skilled governing body has a good knowledge of the school and is effective in challenging and supporting you. However, governors have not always evaluated well enough the effectiveness of the funding to support disadvantaged pupils.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in modern foreign languages improves by ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves so that they make better progress, notably at key stage 4
- they evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding more precisely.

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

Christopher Lee  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, your senior team, subject and pastoral leaders, a group of staff, the chair of the governing body and two further governors. They observed learning in 18 classes, some jointly with senior leaders. They scrutinised pupils' work in lessons, including disadvantaged pupils' books from key stages 3 and 4. Inspectors took account of 139 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the local authority link adviser who supports the school.

Inspectors took account of 63 responses to the staff questionnaire. They met with 20 pupils, representing all age groups, and considered 54 responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspectors analysed a range of school documentation, including the school self-evaluation, the college development plan, information about pupils' achievement and attendance, safeguarding checks, policies and minutes of governors' meetings.