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Ms A Fearon
Headteacher
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Dear Ms A Fearon

Short inspection of Hazelwick School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2016 with Christopher Doherty, 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Working closely with the chair of the governing body, you provide a clear vision and very strong leadership. You and your senior leadership team enthusiastically strive towards achieving an outstanding education for all pupils and sixth formers. With your resolutely high aspirations at the forefront of the school's plans, senior leaders **focus sharply on pupils' welfare and achievement. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy at your school and become fully involved in school life. Senior leaders' impact is** demonstrated in the overall standards, which are consistently above those found nationally, and by the large proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics.

Hazelwick School is a warm and welcoming place to be, there is a clear sense of teamwork and community spirit. **The schools' inclusive ethos** and shared core values nurture excellent working relationships between staff and pupils. Consequently, all **pupils' pastoral and welfare needs are given careful support, alongside their** academic requirements. Pupils were keen to share with inspectors that they feel that staff care for them and understand their needs.

You have managed the recruitment of staff well by developing innovative approaches to recruiting high-quality candidates and ensuring that you retain the best staff to work at Hazelwick. Senior leaders and governors are ambitious to improve the school further and oversee a suitably rigorous approach to managing

teachers' performance. Regular opportunities for staff to work with colleagues from other schools, and strong partnerships with local primary schools, support improvements to the curriculum. A clear programme of teacher coaching and professional development is in place, although you recognise that more needs to be done to ensure all teaching is of consistently high quality. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the school and about you and your leaders. As one **member of staff commented, 'We are a cohesive community ... led by a motivational headteacher to live out the school's vision for every student to maximise their potential'.**

Staff morale is very high and their sense of pride in the school's improvement over recent years is shared by pupils and parents. Pupils confidently welcome visitors, are proud to discuss their work and clearly enjoy working with their teachers and each other. At breaks and lunchtimes, they gather in friendship groups to eat and talk together which contributes to the school's calm and orderly setting.

Overall attendance has been above the national average for some time. Although proud of this achievement, you rightly recognise the attendance of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs is not as strong. You have introduced a range of successful initiatives to narrow these gaps and raise overall attendance still further.

You, together with governors and the senior leadership team, have an accurate understanding of the school and use this to identify strengths and respond well to any areas for development. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to focus on the areas of teaching and learning identified for improvement. Consequently, nearly all teaching is good across the school with particular strengths in mathematics, history and geography.

Improvements to teaching have ensured that standards have risen and all groups of pupils make increased progress from their starting points. The standard of teaching and learning in the sixth form has improved since the previous inspection. Students make consistently good progress across the wide range of academic subjects on offer. In 2015, the overall progress made by pupils by the end of key stage 4 placed the school in the top 11% in the country. However, although disadvantaged pupils made progress above others nationally, the gaps between them and their peers in school widened significantly last year. Leaders have ensured that effective interventions have been put in place in key stage 4 and currently these gaps are narrowing, although there remains work to do to completely eradicate them.

Most teachers deliver interesting lessons and many use highly effective, probing questions to promote deeper thinking and reflection. Where this happens, for example in Year 10 history, teachers ensure a swift pace of learning. Pupils' high-quality work evidences the exceptional progress they make towards their targets. However, in a small minority of lessons, mainly in key stage 3, teachers offer less challenge and the tasks they set do not sufficiently meet the needs of the pupils in the class. This, together with less precise feedback, means that learning is slower in these lessons. Effective systems and training are in place to support these teachers to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors take a rigorous and proactive approach towards safety. The staff vetting record known as the single central record is meticulously maintained. Appropriate checks are made against all adults who work with pupils, and staff receive relevant and regular training on safeguarding. All policies and guidelines on all applicable aspects of safeguarding are in place and clearly steer the very good practice in the school, fostering a culture of vigilance. Regular communication between key staff and other agencies ensures timely and effective support for pupils of concern and reviews the impact of actions already taken.

Tutor times and assemblies are used well to help pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and know that members of staff are always available for them to share any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- You give the school strong, purposeful and strategic leadership. You have recruited wisely and invested in training staff to create a talented and dedicated team with clear lines of responsibility for academic and pastoral leadership. This has led to significantly improved standards of achievement. You are very ably supported by your senior team and governing body to bring about further improvements.
- Governors are a highly dedicated and effective team and they exercise good strategic oversight of the work of the school. They offer wise and insightful challenge to you and your senior team. The chair of the governing body is rightly very proud of the school and she makes sure that the governing body offers very good strategic support for its development.
- By the end of key stage 4, standards in all subjects in 2015 were above or well above the national average. This was especially the case for humanities, science and languages where pupils made exceptional progress. Students make consistently good progress in the range of academic subjects on offer in the sixth form.
- Leaders set high targets and teachers ensure that the most-able pupils are regularly challenged through tasks that promote deep thinking, evaluation and link different topics. This gives the most-able pupils the confidence to engage with, and successfully complete, high-level test questions. As a result, these pupils develop very high aspirations together with the knowledge and skills to achieve them.
- The school has invested in extra staffing and a range of resources to support disadvantaged pupils. Last year, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than their peers by the end of key stage 4. This is changing, pupil premium mentors now offer a bespoke range of interventions and in-class support and these gaps are closing. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to completely eradicate these gaps.

- Leaders have responded well to the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. Regular coaching and training opportunities have led to shared ideas and resources, and supported staff development and improvements to outcomes. You recognise that further work is required to ensure that all teaching becomes as effective as the strongest practice already in the school.
- Leaders make very effective use of performance information in key stages 4 and 5 to accurately monitor the **school's performance** and inform appropriate actions for school improvement planning. Detailed analysis of this information enables them to coordinate highly effective targeted interventions, which accelerate pupils' progress. However, the analysis of performance information in key stage 3 is not so effective. Consequently, senior leaders do not have as clear a vision of the current progress of different groups of pupils. Leaders recognise that improvements are needed to ensure that they can consistently challenge teachers to maximise progress for all groups of pupils in the younger year groups.
- Leaders are passionate about wanting the best for every pupil and relationships between staff and pupils are particularly strong. Pastoral support is very well coordinated and effective. Staff work well together to inspire and challenge the pupils and communicate well with parents. As a result, pupils are well supported and the number of exclusions has fallen considerably over recent years.
- The support offered to pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well matched to their particular need and their progress and welfare are routinely reviewed. Teaching assistants are particularly effective at supporting these pupils in class, so that they can participate fully in lessons. As a result, this group make good progress over time.
- Senior leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons to identify strengths and priorities quickly. They have rightly prioritised ensuring that all teachers concentrate on literacy across the curriculum and this is improving standards. For example, in a Year 7 geography lesson, with a careful focus on subject-specific vocabulary, the teacher crafted a class discussion, encouraging pupils to evaluate the potential impact of global warming. As a result, all of the pupils engaged in producing their own high-level extended written explanations.
- Most teachers have high expectations and use their good subject and assessment knowledge to design stimulating lessons. They focus clearly on **pupils' intended learning. Teachers in mathematics and humanities give precise feedback and guidance to pupils, who then use this to improve their work. Inspectors witnessed how several teachers use questioning and discussion very effectively to probe and develop pupils' understanding. Where all of these activities take place regularly, pupils' books evidence how they make good progress in lessons and over time. In some science lessons seen, and in a very small minority of English lessons, the teacher's expectations were not as high and so the pace of learning was slower.**

- Behaviour is very good; pupils are polite, friendly and continue to conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school site. They value their learning and play a full part in lessons. When challenged, many can demonstrate sophisticated learning skills and offer thoughtful and reflective contributions to group and whole-class discussions. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson one pupil confidently modelled and explained how to solve a multi-stage problem to the rest of the class. This supported his peers to go on and solve similar problems.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and happy at the school and parents confirm this view. Bullying is thought to be rare and pupils are confident that any issues that arise are swiftly resolved by staff when they do occur.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more robust analysis of performance information at key stage 3 ensures that pupils make more consistent progress
- teaching becomes as consistently good as the best examples presently in the school
- gaps in the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others in school continue to close rapidly.

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

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors visited 14 lessons in the school, and looked at learning jointly with the deputy headteacher. We spoke with pupils in lessons and looked at some of their work as well as meeting with pupils both formally and informally. Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and senior leaders. Documentary evidence, including policies, strategic planning documents and analyses of pupils' achievements were evaluated. We also scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and records of governing body meetings. 170 responses to Parent View, 129 staff and 60 pupil questionnaires were also reviewed.