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Mrs Julie Summerfield
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Dear Mrs Summerfield

Short inspection of Horndean Technology College

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 2016 with Caroline Walshe, 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 July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your passion and commitment for every pupil to excel are infectious. As a result, staff and pupils understand the high expectations you have of them and are determined to continue to improve and do their best. You, along with other leaders and governors, are ambitious and live by the school's mantra - 'to achieve excellence, attitude is everything'. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciate the care and support their children receive.

This is a school where pupils' academic achievements and their personal development are regarded as equally important. You and your staff use information about pupils' progress very effectively to quickly identify underachievement. The school provides a wide range of support, closely matched to pupils' needs and circumstances. As you explained, 'Stones are turned more than once to make sure we do the very best for pupils.' As a result, standards are high and the majority of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes better progress. Standards for disadvantaged pupils have risen since the last inspection. This is a result of the extensive and innovative range of help you have in place which is carefully tailored to pupils and their families. However, you recognise this work needs to continue so that the gaps between the achievement of these pupils and other pupils nationally are closed further. A small number of these pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The variety of strategies you have in place to support these pupils and their families is beginning to have a positive impact.

The recruitment of science teachers has been a challenge that leaders have tackled in imaginative and proactive ways. Changes in staffing mean that outcomes in this subject, although improving, are not yet consistently good. Leaders provide effective support and development for teachers and, as a result, standards are improving.

Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate all that it offers them. They wear their uniform smartly, talk enthusiastically about their learning, and treat each other and members of staff with respect. Pupils are keen to do well and are proud when their individual contributions are rewarded. This is an inclusive school community where difference and diversity are celebrated and embraced. As one pupil explained, 'Everyone gets accepted for who they are.'

At the last inspection, inspectors identified a need to ensure teachers used assessment information to plan challenging activities for the range of pupils' abilities. They also required teachers' marking to support faster pupil progress consistently across the school.

Leaders have addressed these aspects effectively so that:

- Pupils frequently receive detailed and useful written and oral feedback about their work. Pupils know how well they are doing and, as a result, what they need to do to improve.
- Lessons are planned with clear consideration of the starting points and targets for groups of pupils with different abilities. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and build appropriate challenge into their lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures are well established and staff receive regular and comprehensive training, including about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Keeping pupils safe is a priority at all levels across the school; staff work together closely to ensure pupils are safe, nurtured and well cared for. Governors are well informed about the school's work in this area as a result of detailed reports from senior leaders. Pupils experiencing difficulties are identified swiftly and staff draw effectively on a wide range of support from external agencies to help pupils and their families. Pupils say they feel safe and they are confident that adults will help them if they need it. This is a view shared by the vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire). Pupils say that bullying is very rare, but they are sure that an adult would deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, for example during the school holidays and when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- Staff follow your example in the way they nurture and develop pupils' individual talents and strengths. The caring ethos of the school is

everywhere; for example, support staff play an equal role in mentoring Year 11 students in the preparation for examinations.

- Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff share the commitment to continuously improve and never to accept 'second best'.
- Governors are proud of the school and share leaders' ambitions that it continues to improve. For example, they have a range of appropriate skills and expertise, but have recently completed a skills audit so that they can identify and fill gaps in their understanding with necessary training.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and the school. They are polite, welcoming and engaging young people who are a credit to themselves and their school. They enjoy coming to school and want to learn and succeed. They show respect towards each other and adults.
- The school has continually refined and developed the curriculum. As a result, pupils are offered a range of pathways and subjects which are closely matched to their needs, interests and abilities. This means that the curriculum supports pupils to do the best they can and prepares them effectively for their next stage of education or training.
- Changes to staffing in science and difficulties recruiting teachers to this subject in the past mean that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are not yet consistently good. Leaders have taken effective and proactive steps to ensure that the department is fully staffed and teachers are given valuable training and support to improve. Consequently, standards are improving.
- You and other leaders have raised the profile and importance of good-quality feedback for pupils across the school. As a result, pupils benefit from frequent and effective guidance about how to improve their work. They use these comments thoughtfully to reflect on their next steps.
- Teachers' planning takes into account effectively the differing needs of pupils. Learning activities usually provide pupils with a good level of challenge and support.
- Leaders have a detailed and accurate overview of the quality of teaching. This information is used very effectively to provide a comprehensive range of training and development opportunities for staff which meets their individual interests and career paths. Staff are encouraged to share good practice and support with each other to improve, for example through the 'guide on the side' programme. As a result, teaching is strengthened and pupils make good and sometimes better progress.
- Staff regard the whole school as a learning community. They give support to and work in partnership with a wide range of primary and secondary schools both in and beyond The Havant Federation. Staff use these experiences effectively to reflect on their own practice and how it can be improved.
- The comprehensive personal, social and health and education programme, along with a rich choice of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility, mean that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development remains a strength of the school. The school's UNICEF Rights Respecting Award threads through the whole

school. It helps develop pupils' acceptance of difference and diversity, and provides them with a strong moral compass.

- Leaders have continued to refine the support provided for disadvantaged pupils. This additional help is carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs. As a result, achievement for these pupils continues to rise.
- Most pupils attend school very regularly. A small number of pupils, many of whom are disadvantaged, attend less regularly. Leaders have worked hard to engage and help parents who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly. Early indications are that these strategies are having a positive impact.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning in science continues to improve so that pupils make consistently good progress
- gaps continue to close between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
- the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, other leaders, teachers, pupils and members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of Hampshire local authority on the telephone. With you or the deputy headteacher, we visited parts of 12 lessons, where we spoke to pupils about their learning, and attended a Year 10 assembly. We considered 72 responses to Parent View, 81 responses to the staff questionnaire and 79 responses to the pupil survey. We examined information on the school's website and considered a range of documentation, including about pupils' achievement, safeguarding procedures and the school improvement plan. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.