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Mr Douglas Thomas
Headteacher
West Sussex Alternative Provision College
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Dear Mr Thomas

Short inspection of West Sussex Alternative Provision College

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018 with Frances Robinson, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Jonathan Whitcombe OI, and Rebecca Greenhalgh OI, 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 West Sussex Alternative Provision College was judged to be good in July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You lead the school with clear determination and passion to see pupils engage in learning and make good progress from their starting points. You are supported ably by your senior leaders, who lead the other sites within the provision well under your clear direction. Teachers and support staff share your vision for all pupils to achieve their best. The majority of staff who responded to the staff survey said that they are proud to work at the school and enjoy working there. As a result of your firm commitment, children are supported well and thrive at West Sussex Alternative Provision College.

Children say that they enjoy coming to school. They say that staff support them well by setting work that is tailored to their needs. One pupil commented: 'It is like being in a private school. I am privileged to be here due to small class sizes and teacher support.' Pupils settle quickly in the school and participate actively in lessons. They usually behave appropriately and respect the rules and routines. On the few occasions that their behaviour slips, staff manage this effectively in line with the school behaviour policy. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, are supportive of the school. They feel that it is well led and that their children make good progress. A small minority felt that behaviour was not good, but these concerns were not judged to be well founded.

Leaders have addressed with some success the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils are being supported to attend better, and many now do so more regularly. However, leaders are acutely aware that more needs to be done so that more pupils attend school regularly.

Across all sites most pupils are achieving well across the broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching is typically good, and learning is planned effectively to ensure that pupils can access learning at a level appropriate for them. However, occasionally, some teaching is not as strong as it is in most classes.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. The single central record details accurately the robust employment checks that leaders carry out when recruiting new staff. Adults are trained appropriately in all areas of child protection and know what actions to take to keep pupils safe from harm. Systems to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements.

The school works effectively with other agencies to make sure that pupils are safe. Staff maintain effective relationships with medical professionals to support highly vulnerable pupils. Leaders' effective work with other safeguarding professionals ensures that vulnerable pupils receive the additional care they need to be safe.

You and your staff show a strong commitment to pupils' well-being. This includes teaching them online safety and understanding the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse. For example, key stage 3 pupils were learning effectively about the potential dangers presented by drinking too much alcohol. They learned about the impact that this can have on their health and well-being, as well as the effects this can have on those around them.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we evaluated leaders' actions to address attendance. We also evaluated leaders' work to ensure that all sites provide consistently high standards in teaching and care. We scrutinised the effectiveness of the support for pupils as they join and leave alternative provision. Finally, we evaluated the suitability of the curriculum for learners' individual needs.
- Leaders' effective action has led to a sharp rise in some pupils' attendance. High expectations to attend school are upheld, and staff with key responsibilities challenge absence more rigorously.
- On the occasions that pupils do not attend school, staff work determinedly to find out why they are not in, and to establish where they are. Pupils and carers respond well to this high level of care, and many are attending more regularly and with improved punctuality. However, you acknowledge that there is more work to be done so that attendance rates continue to improve.
- You have ensured that, despite the school being spread across six sites throughout West Sussex, its values and ethos shine through each location.

- West Sussex Alternative Provision College delivers consistency of education and care across all sites. Across the school sites, there are strengths in teaching, including teachers' questioning skills and the way teachers make learning interesting for pupils. Nevertheless, you acknowledge that there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and not all teaching is yet strong enough.
- Leaders work collaboratively and have established a school-wide approach to managing behaviour and re-engaging pupils into learning. However, each centre has its own unique qualities, providing a strong 'local' offer.
- Leaders work with determination so that, when possible, pupils return to mainstream education, or specialist providers, swiftly. They assess pupils' needs carefully and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to provide an appropriate full-time educational placement. As a result, the school makes sure that pupils' long-term needs are met.
- You have designed a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Learning is carefully planned to interest and enthuse pupils. For example, in art, pupils are encouraged to use techniques that are creative and original. As a result, pupils gain in confidence and are able to access subjects that they have previously found challenging.
- You broaden the wider curriculum through the additional opportunities you offer, such as allowing pupils to help prepare and cook meals at lunchtime for the whole school to eat together. This 'family' ethos helps pupils to feel part of a unit where being with others is valued.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attendance improves
- teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school.

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

Gary Tostevin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all areas of school in many lessons or part lessons. All observations were undertaken jointly with the senior leaders of each site, and samples of pupils' books were scrutinised during lessons. Inspectors held

meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. A meeting was also held with a local authority representative and the chair of governors. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including: leaders' evaluations of school performance; minutes from governors' meetings; school policies; safeguarding records; records of attendance and behaviour; pupil progress information; and information on the school's website. Inspectors spoke to pupils during break and lunchtimes as well as between lessons and in classes. Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as parents' written comments. Inspectors also considered the 33 responses to Ofsted's confidential online staff survey.