

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 June 2017

Mrs Joanna West
Headteacher
Robert May's School
West Street
Odiham
Hook
Hampshire
RG29 1NA

Dear Mrs West

Short inspection of Robert May's School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 2017 with Sharon Cromie, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your reflective approach and distributive leadership ensure that the senior team works effectively to improve the academic achievement and personal development of the pupils in your school. Your school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities. Your school teams, known as 'learning communities', review regularly the strides made towards the school's goals. The governors are equally ambitious and are reviewing the skills they have, and still need, to evaluate and challenge school leaders more efficiently.

There is a positive ethos throughout the school, which is enhanced by strong relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils conduct themselves well, and are respectful and courteous to one another. Behaviour continues to be typically exemplary.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, challenging and interesting. You ensure that the well-planned curriculum provides pupils with a firm foundation for the next stage of their education. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and to strive for excellence. Many pupils take an active role in extra-curricular opportunities. For example, some Year 10 pupils have recently been involved in engineering 'Formula 1' competitions, while others had performed in a regional and national 'Rock Challenge'.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently planned adaptable lessons for the ability of the pupils in their classes and that teachers maintained a focus on the quality of pupils' learning. In addition, inspectors asked leaders to focus on evaluating the positive impact of new initiatives on pupils' knowledge and understanding, and ensure that school information was used effectively by staff to inform planning and measure progress.

You have subsequently taken effective action to address these recommendations. You have invested in strong middle leaders and an effective professional development manager to ensure quality teaching. Staff now plan engaging lessons using prior assessment information and match activities well to pupils' differing needs. Learning conversations feature heavily in lessons, in line with school policy, to ensure that pupils improve and enhance their written work. As a result, GCSE outcomes have improved significantly since the last inspection in English, mathematics and humanities, so they are now as strong as science. However, you agree that disadvantaged pupils could do better in some subjects.

Leaders have recently introduced a new process for target-setting and monitoring. While you are confident that this will help staff to identify where pupils are not making the progress you expect from Year 7, this still needs time to embed. Consequently, tracking, monitoring and intervention across key stage 3 are not as strong as at key stage 4.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. A large team of specifically trained safeguarding staff ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Governors routinely check that all processes and policies are up to date, and that school records are thorough and complete. The school's work in training staff and educating pupils about the risks of child exploitation and e-safety takes a high priority throughout the academic year.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe and feel safe at school. Parents agree that their children are well cared for and safe at school. Pupils say that bullying is rare but is dealt with effectively should it occur. They are confident about whom to go to if they have a concern.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; pupils' attendance; pupils' achievement, including that of disadvantaged pupils, boys and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You have correctly identified that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities needs to improve

further. You have introduced relevant interventions and you have created an attendance team to work with families to improve attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism. This is beginning to have a positive effect on vulnerable pupils and some pupils' attendance has improved as a result. However, you recognise that there is still work to be done to further improve the attendance of these vulnerable groups of pupils.

- You rightly identify that improvements in teaching and learning are due to effective subject leadership, and strong teaching. You have acted quickly to ensure that the most able are stretched and challenged in all subjects, as you had recognised a potential issue in some foundation subjects. In the learning observed during the inspection, we saw how teachers' high expectations and effective planning ensure that both boys and girls make similar progress. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils needs to be more closely tracked and interventions monitored to ensure their impact on reducing differences.
- School leaders have invested heavily in a programme of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by creating a bespoke programme of study and support. There is a specialist resourced autistic unit on site, as well as the school's learning support centre, Hub1. Both units are supported by a professional team whose focus is on the well-being and academic success of its pupils. The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENCo) meets routinely with her team, pupils and their families to review levels of support and celebrate improvements. As a result, the attendance and academic achievements of this group are continuously improving.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils well. This additional funding is contributing to the improvement of this group's outcomes in English, mathematics, science and humanities. However, leaders recognise that interventions need to be tightly monitored to ensure that they are having a positive impact.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance improves for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently good progress across subjects and year groups
- the school's new target-setting process for pupils is quickly embedded so that school information can continue to be used to inform planning and measure progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Walshe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, your leadership team, the chair and representatives of the governing body. We met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their learning. Inspectors visited lessons, in a range of subjects and year groups, with you and members of the leadership team. We looked at the school's documentation, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement, progress and attendance information relating to current pupils, and governors' minutes. We also checked the school's policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding, including pupil premium, and the curriculum. Inspectors considered 153 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 76 responses to the staff questionnaire and 100 pupil questionnaires, provided by Ofsted.