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Mr David Euridge
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Dear Mr Euridge

Short inspection of Reigate Valley College

Following my visit to the school on 5 October 2017 with Lucy English, Her Majesty's 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 outstanding in May 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

You are an inspirational leader who is driven by the belief that every pupil is entitled to another chance and can, and will, achieve. As one staff member explained, you are the 'inspiration from above' and it is your passion that inspires everyone working at Reigate Valley to do their very best for the pupils in their care. Together with other senior leaders, you have developed a staff team who fully live out the school's promise to pupils: 'Helping you to move on. Helping your readiness to learn'.

Your professional and dedicated team of staff successfully makes life and learning better for the pupils who attend the school, whether they attend for a short time or have a longer stay. Staff build professional relationships with whole families so that they can fully understand their pupils' needs. It is no wonder that pupils and their families often do not want to leave when it is time to move on. Although pupils are extremely successful during their time at the school, you agreed that your team could do more to track how well pupils do after they leave. This would allow you to evaluate how successful your work has been at preparing pupils for future life, and to refine it further.

You have shared best practice through the federation with Wey Valley College and the Fordway Centre. This has enabled staff to learn professionally from each other,

to improve their work and make a positive impact on pupils' well-being and progress. Opportunities for successful staff to step up into leadership roles have been grasped positively and newer leaders are already having a much wider impact across the school. For example, they have developed a new way of assessing pupils' behaviour to show the great success you have in this area, before helping pupils to progress academically.

The management committee adds notable experience and expertise. The members value the way you always think about what more you could be doing, and challenge yourself and your team. Management committee members add their own support and challenge to this, and frequently help solve complex issues around funding and pupils' placements at the school. They value the work of leaders but recognise that some elements of the leadership structure need to be reviewed so that there are even clearer lines of accountability. The management committee are determined to ensure that the outstanding provision currently in place can be sustained in the longer term.

Reigate Valley College is a place where pupils can be themselves, within sensible and agreed boundaries. They trust their key workers completely and will often confide in them. This helps to keep them safe. Key workers often help pupils to overcome trauma of some kind and to be better versions of themselves. This helps pupils to make better life choices. Staff are very aware of their responsibility to model positive caring relationships to pupils whose circumstances often make them vulnerable. They do this very successfully. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and very often demonstrate improved attendance compared to their time in mainstream settings. However, more work needs to be done to improve this further.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to extend the range of subjects available at all key stages. The vast majority of the curriculum is now delivered in house. It is closely matched to pupils' needs because you have more control over the content and can also control the quality of provision. At key stage 4, pupils have opportunities to gain foundation and level 1 qualifications, such as functional skills, and then build on them to achieve GCSEs in a range of subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders are unwavering in their determination to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding training takes place across the federation regularly and goes beyond the statutory requirements. This ensures that staff are highly aware of the specific risks faced by pupils at Reigate Valley.

There are rigorous vetting procedures for all staff, including drivers who transport pupils to school and between sites. These drivers are often the first people to hear about pupils being at risk and alert relevant staff accordingly. Highly effective systems to record and track concerns are robust and allow leaders to access important information about pupils quickly and securely, irrespective of which of the school's five sites they are attending.

Staff are acutely aware of the dangers of child sexual exploitation, gang culture, extremism and online safety. Pupils feel safe at school from these dangers and feel they can confide in their key workers who they can trust. Key workers develop strong relationships with pupils, families and external agencies to help pupils manage the risks they sometimes find themselves facing outside of school.

All too often, leaders are frustrated by the response of other agencies to their concerns. As a result, leaders tenaciously escalate their actions when they believe their pupils may be at risk.

Leaders know that when pupils are in school, they can educate them about being safe, for example through the well-thought-out and highly relevant citizenship curriculum. However, they recognise that pupils need to attend school more often to truly benefit from this.

Inspection findings

- During this short inspection, my colleague and I worked with you and your leadership team to investigate: the quality of the key stage 4 curriculum; how well leaders maintain high-quality behaviour, teaching and outcomes over multiple sites; and how successfully the school works with other providers and professionals to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education.
- Key stage 4 pupils normally attend the school for a fixed two-year period. There are personalised pathways for each pupil to follow academic and vocational courses of their choice at key stage 4. Every pupil has the opportunity to leave key stage 4 with meaningful qualifications. Leaders tap in well to pupils' aspirations and interests, providing courses such as construction and horse care. For those pupils who are unable to attend the school for various reasons, high-quality individual tuition takes place at home, in local libraries or at one of the school's smaller sites.
- In 2017, nearly all Year 11 pupils achieved at least one GCSE pass. Over a third of pupils achieved at least one strong pass, showing rapid progress from their starting points. This academic achievement, together with technical qualifications and meaningful work experience, help these older pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders, and the management committee, recognise there is more work to do to track the success of key stage 4 pupils once they leave Reigate Valley. This is to understand and evaluate how effective they have been in helping them be successful in the future. Anecdotally, they recognise that some pupils do not do well in larger 16 to 19 provision.
- There have been clear opportunities for new leaders across the school to take on more responsibility. Working across the federation provides more opportunities for new leaders to develop their skills.
- Staff find their jobs rewarding and appreciate the support, training and feedback they receive from leaders. However, the current leadership structure, especially of the primary provision, while effective, is quite complicated.

- The strong sense of team work helps staff to support pupils, their families and each other. This ensures that everyone is always doing their best for everyone else. As a result, teaching is highly effective and high expectations about positive behaviour are prevalent across all of the school sites.
- Pupils attend the primary provision because they have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from mainstream settings. Some pupils attend while they are awaiting an appropriate specialist placement. A nurture-based curriculum at key stage 1 and a theme-based curriculum at key stage 2 help pupils to make progress in developing appropriate behaviours and a positive attitude towards learning.
- At key stage 3, pupils attend for an agreed period of time as an intervention, working in partnership with their mainstream schools. The curriculum is focused on key subjects, such as English and mathematics, but also gives pupils high-quality practical opportunities such as learning to cook. Pupils are very positive about how this provision is successful at helping them to behave appropriately and make progress with their learning.
- The management committee has strong representation from local mainstream headteachers, which strengthens partnership working. Local headteachers understand what the school is trying to achieve and can see the real successes it has with their pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue the relentless focus on improving attendance
- leadership responsibilities are reviewed to ensure that there are clear lines of accountability
- practice to track closely pupils' destinations and future success is sharpened.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectors visited each of the school sites at least once and observed learning across all key stages in a wide range of lessons. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. One inspector also observed learning with an external

provider. Inspectors met with leaders throughout the day and with groups of staff at each of the three main sites. They checked safeguarding records and other school documentation. Inspectors spoke to the chair and vice-chair of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors considered seven responses to the pupil survey and 36 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the Parent View questionnaire.