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Mr Adrian Laing  
Headteacher  
Wimbledon College  
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SW19 4NS

Dear Mr Laing

### **Short inspection of Wimbledon College**

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 2017 with Carolyn Dickinson, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Kanwaljit Singh, 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 2013.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You ensure that the school provides an inclusive, orderly and welcoming environment where pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. Overall, GCSE outcomes improved considerably in 2017, with pupils making above-average progress. This includes disadvantaged pupils. In part, this was because of pupils' excellent performance in mathematics and science, which are strengths of the school. This cohort also achieved particularly well in language and humanities subjects. As a result, standards at the end of key stage 4 are high. Nevertheless, more work is needed to ensure that pupils' outcomes in English match the strengths evident in mathematics.

You have high expectations, which is reflected in your ambitious vision for the school's future direction. Together with senior leaders, you evaluate carefully what the school does well and where further improvements are needed. For example, pupils' progress in English is improving and leaders have prioritised this as an area for development so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve to the very best of their abilities. You have wisely developed partnerships with other schools to support leaders' efforts to strengthen the quality of teaching and the curriculum, including in the sixth form. Equally, leaders work closely with local primary schools to ensure that Year 7 pupils get off to a smooth start to school and build successfully on their prior learning. Middle leaders feel well supported in developing the skills they need to make a positive difference to the quality of pupils' learning in their respective areas of responsibility.

You have placed pupils' welfare and personal development at the heart of the school's work. Pupils benefit from strong levels of support, guidance and care through the chaplaincy and pastoral teams. This contributes effectively to their positive attitudes to learning and prepares them well for the next steps in their education. You and your staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to be 'men for others' through the embodiment of the school's core values.

Your staff enjoy working at the school and are fully committed to ensuring that pupils make the most of their education. This is exemplified in the rich programme of clubs and trips on offer, which promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning and enables them to successfully explore their talents and interests. Opportunities for pupils to develop their sports skills are particularly strong and highly valued by pupils, parents and carers alike. The majority of parents agree that their children are happy and that the school supports them to make good progress.

Governors are committed to the ongoing improvement of the school. They fully understand their role in holding leaders to account so that the school builds on existing strengths. They know the school's strengths and areas for development and as a result, challenge leaders effectively to ensure improvements are secured, such as in the school's work in mathematics and, more recently, English.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding is effective by providing frequent and relevant training for staff and governors in all aspects of safeguarding. As a result, staff are clear about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe and report any concerns promptly. Records of concerns are well organised and comprehensive, demonstrating that leaders respond to any concerns in a timely manner. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks is up to date and well maintained.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding successfully promote an ongoing culture of vigilance around safeguarding concerns, for example by developing staff and pupils' awareness of the risks posed by female genital mutilation. The school is expanding its safeguarding team, which underlines leaders' commitment to maintaining high levels of vigilance and care within the school.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are taught well in how to keep themselves safe in person and online through the school's well-targeted study programmes. They know who to speak to should they have any concerns about their own safety or the safety of others. The school's chaplaincy programme provides extensive opportunities for reflection and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils say that they greatly value this aspect of the school's work with them.

A small number of staff reported that pupils' behaviour could be even better. Inspection evidence confirmed that pupils typically behave well and that little time is lost during

lessons due to disruptive behaviour. Pupils and staff say that bullying is dealt with effectively. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance and behaviour regularly. However, they do not systematically evaluate the impact of their strategies to reduce persistence absence rates for disadvantaged pupils.

Regular training means the governing body retains a strong oversight of the school's work to safeguard pupils' welfare. Governors regularly review school procedures and ensure they are effective in practice.

## **Inspection findings**

- The first key line of enquiry for this inspection focused on how well the school supports groups of pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. I particularly focused on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Information on pupils' outcomes indicates some unevenness in how well these groups of pupils achieved in 2017 and that disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive well-targeted support during lessons to ensure they achieve as well as their peers. Work in pupils' books shows that overall they are making good progress. However, in 2016 disadvantaged pupils' progress was lower than that of other pupils nationally. Leaders have taken decisive action to tackle this through the strategic use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than was previously the case, particularly in mathematics and languages. However, while the performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving, their progress is not yet in line with that of other pupils nationally in English. On occasions, staff are not aware of which pupils are disadvantaged and this prevents them from providing these pupils with extra help at the earliest possible stage.
- Leaders and staff deploy a range of strategies to secure better rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils. However, overall, persistent absent rates for disadvantaged pupils remain higher than other pupils nationally. Further work is needed in this area to ensure that absence is not a barrier to ensuring even stronger rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils.
- In 2016, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made less progress overall than their peers nationally. This was particularly the case for pupils who have an education, health and care plan. Leaders have acted decisively to strengthen the provision for these pupils, including the appointment of new staff. The school's register of eligible pupils has been completely reviewed and additional support is now targeted closely to pupils' needs. Visits to lessons confirm that pupils receive the extra help they need to grow in confidence and learn well. These improvements are evident in the improvement in pupils' GCSE outcomes in 2017, with pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities making above-average progress overall. However, as leaders acknowledged, the small cohort and ever-changing needs of these pupils mean that continued close monitoring is crucial.
- The second key line of enquiry considered how the curriculum supports pupils' achievement in a range of subjects, beyond English, mathematics and science. The school offers a broad curriculum and an impressive enrichment offer.

- Leaders have identified English as an area for improvement based on historical GCSE outcomes in 2016 for the most able pupils and in 2017 for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have made adjustments to the English curriculum to ensure that there is sufficient focus on pupils' creative writing skills. As a result, teachers challenge pupils to produce high-quality writing in a range of genres and subjects. This work is at an early stage and has therefore not had a sustained impact in improving pupils' overall performance in English.
- Leaders have also acted quickly to strengthen teaching in religious studies and as a result, pupils' achievement has improved considerably in this subject. Leaders have rightly turned their focus to strengthening teaching in art. However, this work is at an early stage and consequently has not secured sustained improvements in the standards pupils achieve.
- Leaders have reflected on the options available to pupils at key stage 4 and have made changes to the curriculum which pupils are required to study. This provides for a more personalised approach and ensures that leaders are providing a diet of subjects which motivate pupils to succeed and achieve their potential.
- The third line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form and how effectively this supported pupils' good progress in a range of subjects and qualifications.
- A high proportion of pupils move on to the school's sixth form after Year 11. Retention rates between Year 12 and Year 13 are strong. Students feel safe, behave well and value the enrichment opportunities provided. They have access to high quality, impartial careers information and guidance that enables them to make informed decisions about their next steps into higher education, employment and apprenticeships. High proportions of students go on to higher education with an above-average number of students securing places at Russell Group universities.
- Over the past three years there has been a steady increase in the progress students have made in academic subjects. This is supported by the effective teaching, particularly in further mathematics and English literature. However, although good overall, students' progress remains uneven, particularly in vocational subjects.
- Leaders are taking effective action to raise standards in the sixth form. They have prioritised developing students' extended writing skills to enable them to achieve the highest possible standards. Leaders are also reviewing the key stage 4 curriculum to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with the rigour of the courses they follow. Effective partnerships with local schools are helping leaders strengthen teaching and broaden the curriculum offer to ensure that students are routinely challenged to achieve to the very best of their abilities.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- their work to strengthen pupils' progress in English is maintained and pupils' achievement in English is as strong as that found in mathematics
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with other pupils nationally

- in the sixth form, students achieve to the very best of the abilities across all the academic and vocational subjects they study.

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

Yours sincerely

Sophie Cavanagh  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your deputy headteachers, senior leaders and four members of the governing body, including the chair. We met with middle leaders and pupils from across all key stages to hear their views of the school. We also spoke with pupils about their learning in the lessons and considered the 189 responses received from the pupil survey. We evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies for keeping children safe, training, safeguarding checks and record-keeping. We considered a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, pupil assessment information and behaviour and attendance records. Inspectors gathered the views of staff through meetings and surveys, with 89 responses received. We also considered the views of parents and received 193 responses to the parent survey.