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Mr Philip Adams
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Adams

Short inspection of The Corbet School Technology College

Following my visit to the school on 15 February 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Karen Lockett, 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 June 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, supported by an effective leadership team, have an accurate view of all elements of school life. You are open and specific about where weaknesses exist, for example in engineering and food technology. You demonstrate that weaknesses are identified quickly and addressed immediately with effective plans which have the full oversight of governors.

Overall, attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Year 11 have been strong in each year since the last inspection. While in 2016, middle-prior-attainment disadvantaged pupils' progress was significantly below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points, this group was small and their progress data was negatively affected by the long-term medical absences of a small number of pupils. You have detailed and well-thought-out plans in place to support the success of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school and are monitoring the implementation of these carefully.

You have created an environment where pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. This means that both teachers and pupils are very positive about school. Teachers feel able to concentrate fully on making sure that lessons are interesting and meet pupils' needs, while pupils listen carefully to their teachers and work hard in lessons.

Parents are very supportive of the school and a large majority would recommend it to other parents. Parents made many positive comments through the Parent View questionnaire. For example, one parent commented, 'My children love attending this school, we are really impressed with the enthusiasm and engagement of staff.' Other parents said that the pastoral care in the school is particularly effective: 'The pastoral team need recognition for their commitment to the children.' Another commented, 'The school has a fantastic nurturing and caring environment engendered by staff who really care about the pupils.' These comments are representative of several others about the way in which the school cares for the individual needs of its pupils.

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with raising the level of challenge for the most able pupils and developing teachers' questioning skills. You have addressed these areas very well.

In 2016, the most able pupils in Year 11, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieved in line with other pupils nationally with similar starting points. You have provided teachers with training in the use of questioning. Evidence gathered on inspection and your own records show that this has been effective. Teachers use questioning to check pupils' knowledge and then use probing questions to extend pupils' understanding. The most able pupils currently in the school, across all year groups, are making strong progress towards their aspirational targets.

Teachers do not only challenge the most able pupils, however. All the staff that inspectors spoke to were clear that every pupil should be challenged highly in lessons. Inspectors saw examples of pupils with low prior attainment being offered these high levels of challenge in English and mathematics. These pupils were tackling increasingly difficult problems, using sophisticated technical vocabulary and making strong progress.

You have introduced a new tracking and assessment system across all year groups. While this system is allowing you to track pupils' progress carefully, it is not understood consistently by all staff and pupils. You acknowledge that this is an area for development.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The governing body and headteacher scrutinise safeguarding documents monthly. This means that vetting procedures for teachers are robust and complete, and governors have a detailed knowledge of safeguarding practices in the school.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding have a particularly strong overview of the risks specific to pupils in the local community. All staff are well trained in safeguarding and leaders have ensured that a range of extra training is given so that staff are more highly prepared to address these risks.

Attendance is tracked meticulously so that leaders spot issues early and can deal with them swiftly.

Inspection findings

- Governors have an accurate view of the school because they visit the school, speak to pupils and staff and are involved in subject audits. They have worked with leaders to establish a system which helps them hold school leaders to account robustly. For example, governors scrutinise the school improvement plan at each meeting so that they are fully aware of how much progress is being made. Governors have also asked leaders to provide them with probing questions to accompany each area of the improvement plan. This means that they can have a detailed and informed dialogue with leaders about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct and work. This means that incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. This is supported by the school's own behaviour logs. Pupils told inspectors that low-level disruption in lessons is extremely unusual and that they can concentrate fully on their work. Inspectors' visits to lessons, meetings with pupils and observations in social times showed that pupils are consistently well mannered and hard-working.
- In engineering and food technology, attainment was weak in 2016. Leaders have analysed the reasons for this carefully. They have changed the curriculum and strengthened subject leadership through a new appointment and pupils are now making better progress. Leaders continue to monitor these subjects closely to ensure that pupils are successful.
- Almost all pupils take a GCSE in a modern foreign language. Attainment in languages was just below the national average in 2016. Leaders are committed to the importance of languages for all pupils and have appointed new subject leadership to this area. They have changed the curriculum to introduce a taster of two languages in Year 7, then a choice of languages in Year 8. This means that pupils learn their GCSE language for longer and choose which languages they would like to study.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funding effectively. There are a range of interventions for disadvantaged pupils. For example, leaders ensure that these pupils take a full part in school life, including school visits, and that they have access to extra resources, revision trips and textbooks as appropriate. The school's own information shows that they currently make good progress across the curriculum and the difference between disadvantaged pupils' progress and that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points is diminishing.
- Some pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, join the school in Year 7 with low literacy and numeracy skills. The school uses the extra funding provided for these pupils very effectively. Pupils have small-class tuition, personal support and regular supported reading development sessions. Staff track these pupils' progress carefully and the school's records show that all of these pupils make significant improvements to their skills by the end of Year 7. This increases their

confidence and is having an extremely positive impact on their progress across all of their subjects.

- Attendance across the school is above the national average and improving. Leaders make good use of the education welfare officer, identify attendance issues quickly and address them effectively. In 2016, for example, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below the national average. These groups' attendance is now in line with national averages.
- Pupils value highly the personal, social and health education that their teachers provide. They say that the open and detailed way in which issues such as sexuality, extremism, sexting and abuse are taught makes them well informed and able to make mature choices.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils' progress continues to improve so that all disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally with similar starting points
- the changes already made in the curriculum for engineering and food technology are fully embedded so that pupils achieve more highly in these subjects
- the changes to the tracking and assessment system are fully embedded so that all staff, pupils and parents fully understand their targets and 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 Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dan Owen
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior leadership team. We visited several classes, some with senior leaders, and spoke to pupils in lessons about their work. We observed pupils' behaviour before school, between lessons and at lunchtime and talked with them about their experiences of school. We met with governors and scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding. We also considered 77 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 102 responses the online pupil questionnaire. The views of staff

were considered through speaking with some staff and evaluating 32 responses to a staff questionnaire.