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Ms Jay Blundell
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Blundell

Short inspection of Foundry College

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2018 with Mark Bagust, 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 February 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 have worked hard to create a warm and welcoming environment. Visitors are not only greeted by friendly staff, but they are also given a gentle welcome from your delightful therapy dog, 'Honey'.

You care deeply about the pupils and are determined to make sure that your school provides the nurturing environment that they need. Your staff fully support you, and they demonstrate a deep commitment to the well-being of every pupil. All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said how proud they were to work at this school. They are also fully supportive of the school's aims of 'inspiring the learning of pupils in a safe and respectful environment, where pupils can develop positive skills for life'.

Pupils are happy at your school, they say that there is always someone to talk to and that their views are valued. Parents and carers praise the improvements in their children's behaviour and attitudes to learning. Some of these improvements are due to your effective therapeutic provision, such as 'attachment-based therapy' (therapy based on establishing trusting and supportive relationships). The sporting opportunities that you provide, for example golf and skiing, are also effective in promoting pupils' social skills, such as turn-taking and working in a team.

Most of the pupils on roll have only been at your school for a few months. This is because your school works successfully to reintegrate pupils either back into local schools or to appropriate specialist providers.

Your team provides an outreach service for pupils who are still on roll at other schools, but who may benefit from the expertise of your staff. This has been very successful. Since the beginning of this academic year, your staff have helped well over a hundred pupils.

At the last inspection, you were asked to give pupils more chances to write. We found that, due to the constant encouragement and support from your staff, current pupils make rapid gains in their writing skills. You were also asked to improve the information you provided to pupils about their targets. We found that current pupils have a good understanding of their targets.

While there have been many successes, you are not complacent and recognise that there is more you can do to improve the school. We agreed that staff need to closely monitor the progress of those who are educated off-site, so they can use that information to always provide appropriately challenging work. You also acknowledge that while the school gives pupils a range of life experiences and employment opportunities, these could be broadened still further.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring that every pupil is safeguarded from harm. They know the right procedures in dealing with issues such as self-harm, overdosing or alcohol misuse. Staff are ever vigilant and share information effectively with a range of external agencies, including social services, and the child and adolescent mental health service.

All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey consider that pupils are safe while at your school. Leaders also carefully check up on any pupil absence to ensure that pupils stay safe when not in school. You have ensured that staff training is thorough and meets the specific needs of pupils. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and that records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Since you joined Foundry College as headteacher in September 2016, your dynamic leadership has improved the school in many ways. You have ensured that staff are well trained so that they can fulfil their responsibilities effectively. You have improved the relationships with local schools, especially secondary schools. There is now a greater exchange of information about pupils who have been excluded or who are at risk of being excluded. School documentation, such as improvement plans, provides an honest and detailed assessment of how the school is performing currently and the next areas to focus on.
- We agreed to check how well the management committee is holding leaders to account. We found that members of the committee are highly experienced in areas such as education, finance and social services. There is regular professional dialogue and they support you well in continuing to improve the school.

- We found that staff have high aspirations for pupils. They help pupils to develop a sense of self-belief in their abilities. Inspectors spoke to several parents during their visit, and all agreed that staff are dedicated to helping their children to achieve their best.
- We found that throughout the school, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. Staff carefully assess each pupil's skills and abilities when they first start Foundry College; they then provide work that is of the right level of difficulty so that pupils can make rapid progress. Due to the good quality of teaching, pupils achieve well in a range of accreditations from entry level to GCSE. Last year, every pupil achieved at least one level 2 qualification and there was a large jump in the percentage of pupils gaining A to C grades at GCSE. Some pupils were able to achieve the highest grades in several GCSEs.
- One area we agreed to look at was the impact of the curriculum on pupils' future life chances. You are successful in ensuring that all pupils who leave your college have a placement in either further education, training or employment. We found that you go to great lengths to offer a broad range of GCSEs and other qualifications, dependant on pupils' needs. Vocational education is well developed. For example, pupils who attend an auto-skills centre say that it is preparing them well for their future careers. You are successful in ensuring that every pupil in Years 9, 10 and 11 has a week-long work-experience placement. This gives pupils valuable experiences and helps them to feel better prepared about entering employment. However, you are constantly striving to make sure that pupils are even better prepared for their future lives. You recognise that you need to give pupils a broader range of life experiences and employment opportunities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress of those educated off-site is monitored closely so that teachers can use that information to provide work that is always appropriately challenging
- the college broadens pupils' life experiences and employment opportunities so that they are even better prepared for their future lives.

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

Yours sincerely

Liz Bowes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, senior teachers and staff. We met members of the management committee, which included representatives from local primary and secondary schools. There was also a telephone conversation with the chair of the management committee. An inspector met with a representative of the local authority who is also a member of the management committee.

Parents' views were gathered by discussions with two parents, telephone calls to five parents and four responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We spoke with pupils and considered the two responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. We spoke informally to staff and viewed the 12 staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

We visited classrooms with senior leaders to observe learning. There was also a visit to an auto-skills centre. We looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and the school's self-evaluation. We conducted a full review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe, training records, recruitment checks and record-keeping.