



2nd November 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Sir Harry Smith Community College **“continues to be good”**.

You are aware that Sir Harry Smith Community College was visited by Ofsted on the 10th October 2018 and the governing body, staff and I are delighted to report to you that **“this school continues to be good”**.

The Inspector found our College to be **“a vibrant, welcoming and caring school, in which pupils enjoy their learning and feel valued”** and where **“staff ensure pupils behave very well”**. This was supported by **“a high proportion of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire”**.

Inspectors also commented that **“pupils benefit from learning within a calm and productive classroom environment; they get to work quickly and maintain their focus, including when the work they are completing is challenging”**. Furthermore, the inspectors found that **“pupils participate in the exceptionally rich range of cultural, musical and sporting activities that the school has to offer.”**

I was extremely proud of the maturity and the passion in which our students conducted themselves during the inspection and how they spoke about our College. Students made it clear that **“teachers go the extra mile to help them”**. Students also reported to the inspectors that **“they feel safe at school and enjoy their learning”**.

The report outlines the views of Ofsted and captures the strong ethos of our College. In particular, inspectors comment that:

- “Relationships are highly positive, which gives pupils the confidence to share their ideas or to ask for help if they are unsure of something.”
- “Leaders and teachers are encouraging a sense of high ambition and aspiration among the students.”
- “Staff, pupils and parents are rightly confident that pupils are well looked after at school. Leaders, including governors, have helped create and sustain a culture in which pupils’ safety is everyone’s responsibility.”
- “Leaders, including governors, are rigorous in checking the quality of the school’s work and determined in our pursuit of improvement.”
- “Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities ... make good progress because they are well supported.”

The College has an extremely positive relationship with all its local primary schools. Inspectors recognised that **“in the College’s pursuit of improvement ... these developments in Year 7 have enabled pupils to make a strong start to their secondary education”**.

In relation to our Sixth Form provision, inspectors also commented that **“students’ progress was strong in both their academic and vocational qualifications...the proportion of students who gained places at the country’s most selective universities was above the national average”**.

The College’s previous Ofsted inspection in November 2014 showed that one of our next steps for improvement was the extent to which the most able students make progress. I am delighted that during this inspection the hard work of all staff was recognised. Inspectors commented on how:

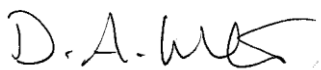
- The College has “focused upon increasing the opportunities that the most able have for personal development, through engaging them in activities outside the classroom. The breadth of this is considerable”.
- The College has “worked to increase the extent to which the most able complete learning activities that develop their thinking and deepen their knowledge and understanding”.
- “At GCSE, teachers typically provide very precise guidance to the most able pupils that helps them understand how best to apply what they know to the more demanding examination questions.”
- “Many teachers ask the most able pupils questions that encourage them to think hard.” “This helps to prepare key stage 4 pupils well for post-16 study.”

In terms of next steps, the report identified three areas of development for the College to support us in being judged outstanding in the future; these three areas for improvement had already been prioritised by the College and we have already started working on these areas through our College Improvement Plan.

I would therefore like to thank you all for your support, especially those parents who completed the survey and submitted such positive comments in relation to the work of the College. The Lead Inspector was impressed by how many parents would recommend Sir Harry Smith Community College to another parent.

I am excited and privileged to lead this College for the future and believe there are no limits to what we can achieve. On publication of this very complimentary and positive report, I should like to take this opportunity to thank our exceptional teaching and support staff, governors, parents and members of the wider community. Most of all, I should like to thank all of our students for their loyalty, resilience, generosity, integrity, compassion, commitment and hard work and would like to take this opportunity to thank them for embracing changes and continuing to help us drive school improvement, never settling for second best.

Yours sincerely



Dawn White
Principal



Jonathan Digby
CEO, Aspire Learning Trust