

Steph Woodward reporting...

## Making a difference!



On Monday 2nd October, members of the School Council and the Rights Respecting Group had the opportunity to visit Little Havens Hospice to see some of the amazing work they do to support children with life-threatening or life-limiting conditions. The school has raised money for Little Havens consistently over a number of years through various fundraising activities, demonstrating the pupils' commitment to helping this worthy cause. The pupils had a tour of the facilities and were able to see how some of the money raised by the school has been put to use. Something that particularly struck the pupils was how welcoming the hospice felt and how positive and vibrant the environment was. They left Little Havens with a real appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the staff there and renewed determination to continue to raise money for the hospice.

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### Headlines by Andy Hodgkinson

#### WELCOME BACK

I hope everyone has enjoyed a well-earned break over half-term, and a warm welcome back to all our pupils for another busy term.

#### KEY DATES

As ever, please can I remind parents and carers that key dates are available on our website and, in particular, I would like to remind you that we have an INSET day on Friday 24th November, and term will finish at 12.25pm on Tuesday 19th December.

#### OFSTED SECTION 8 INSPECTION

As I mentioned in a previous edition of the Sweyne Park Times, following on from the Department of Education's visits to new Sixth Forms, Ofsted has also been inspecting schools with new Sixth Forms, and therefore visited our school on 3rd October. This was to determine whether or not our provision

was "effective" (no other judgement is given for such visits). I am pleased to say that Ofsted do consider our provision to be effective and there is, therefore, no change to the school's overall outstanding rating. The report will be available on our website and is also attached to this issue of the Sweyne Park Times.

Our students were excellent ambassadors for the school, and this was recognised by the inspectors. There were a number of strengths identified including the following: students' enjoyment and attendance at school, teachers' subject knowledge, post-18 destinations, better progress being made in many academic subjects and our vocational BTEC offer, as well as safeguarding. Our areas for development are: sharing existing good practice, ensuring consistently high levels of challenge in lessons, and continuing to develop our provision for high quality professional development to improve further rates of progress.

#### AND FINALLY

I hope you enjoy a pleasant but safe Bonfire Night this weekend!

## Book of the Week

THE WICKFORD DOOM  
by Chris Priestley

Harry and his mum have just inherited Wickford Hall, a grand house by the sea, but not all is what they were expecting. Soon Harry is drawn into a dark family history, stories of lost children, and the legend of the Wickford Doom - a creepy painting of a demon that would do as you ask if you wish for something bad. This is an atmospheric and gripping mystery story with an exciting supernatural twist.



ONE OF THE FREE BOOKBUZZ CHOICES FOR YEAR 7!



## DUTY PUPILS

Thank you for all your help:

Eleanor, Samuel, Ellis & Kayleigh (8MLw)

Andrew & Kelsey (8IMi)

Heavenly, Freya, Lucas & Bailey (8NGa)

Pupil Services

## THANK YOU

Muriel's friend, Annette, from the Knitting Club for donating a huge bag of yarns to the Textiles department.

Maria Cooper and Ruth Jordan

## ESSEX BOOK AWARDS LAUNCH



Last week, a minibus of eager pupils from the Library's Book Club travelled to Great Baddow High School for the launch of this year's Essex Book Awards. With much anticipation, the six short-listed books were revealed to us by writer Dave Cryer and Allison King, from the Essex School Library Services. Dave introduced each book by reading out the very beginning and then invited pupils to choose drama scripts he had prepared to act out. It was fantastic to watch our pupils throw themselves into their performances, mixing so easily with pupils from other schools; a wonderful opportunity to discover each book through the medium of drama. Sweyne Park pupils were the first to volunteer and they all performed at least once. As always, there was even a performance from the Librarians, with some dubious acting talent! We all came away eager to start reading.

"It was good! I was really nervous at the start but I ended up performing twice!"  
**Lucie (7LGr)**

"All the people were so friendly and welcoming. I liked the acting - it was a different way of reading a book." **Faith (7RPI)**



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19 October 2017

Mr Andy Hodgkinson  
Headteacher  
The Sweyne Park School  
Sir Walter Raleigh Drive  
Rayleigh  
Essex  
SS6 9BZ

Dear Mr Hodgkinson

### **No formal designation inspection of The Sweyne Park School**

Following my visit with David Davies, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 3 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because you have added an extra key stage to the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks of staff and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, a group of sixth-form students, three members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.

Inspectors scrutinised the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documentation, progress data and a report following a visit by the regional schools commissioner.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Senior leaders and governors have established an effective sixth form.

Safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

The school is a larger-than-average secondary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. There are fewer pupils who speak English as an additional language than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or and education, health and care plan is above average. The school has a resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairment. The school has formed a multi-academy trust with one primary school with effect from 1 October 2017.

## **Effectiveness of the new sixth form**

Along with the deputy headteacher and head of sixth form, you have established an effective sixth form which now better meets the needs of sixth-form students. You explained that when you initially introduced a new sixth form, the purpose was threefold: to fill an identified gap in academic provision locally; to be fully inclusive and to raise pupils' aspirations.

You acknowledge in your self-evaluation document and sixth-form improvement plan that you were not sufficiently selective when opening the sixth form, bearing in mind that the majority of courses were academic. Hence, students' outcomes were well below average in your first year of advanced level outcomes in 2016.

You have created two permanent positions for the heads of Year 12 and 13. These members of staff have received high-quality training, and along with the head of sixth form, are adept at monitoring the effectiveness of the sixth-form provision. Between them, they are able to provide an appropriate degree of support and challenge to the sixth-form team.

The sixth form students enjoy school and attend regularly. Attendance for 2016 to 2017 was just over 95%. You have strong systems in place to work with students whose attendance is at risk of falling below 95%. Additionally, any student whose cumulative lateness exceeds 60 minutes, is required to make up this lost time through additional study. You have also worked hard to improve the regularity of communication with students' parents, keeping them informed of their children's progress and arranging additional events to help them to support their children at home with their studies. The sixth-form centre provides a pleasant area in which students are able to study as well as socialise.

The new sixth form offers an appropriate curriculum for the students you wish to recruit. You offer a wide range of up to 24 academic courses, including further mathematics, Mandarin Chinese and psychology. Your choice of three different types of pathways in the sixth form allows students to choose courses of study and the way their progress is assessed. Your 'UCAS pathway', the most popular,

prepares students for higher education, whereas your 'professional pathway' prepares them for the world of work or an apprenticeship. For students who have not yet decided, you allow them to keep their options open by offering them an 'open pathway'. You strongly encourage students to gain the extended project qualification in order to develop their analytical and research skills. Additionally, you expect all students for whom it is appropriate to sit the advanced supplementary examination in their chosen subjects in Year 12, as you believe this prepares them well for their advanced level examinations, as well as providing you with a tool to measure their progress in the subject.

You have wisely established systems to improve the skills of your teachers so that they are able to deliver post-16 courses confidently. This work is ongoing and it is important to continue this focus as the sixth form continues to grow. You have also actively encouraged several of your staff to become advanced level examiners in the subjects they teach. This gives them a deeper insight into how their subjects will be assessed. You have also encouraged your teachers to work collaboratively in groups of three, where they discuss effective aspects of teaching methodology and share this with their colleagues. It is important that this strategy continues in order to reduce variation in the quality of teaching.

You have put together a comprehensive 16 to 19 study programme which is supplemented through a varied enrichment programme, typically on Wednesday afternoons. This programme offers students the opportunity to do work experience in primary schools or to volunteer in charity shops. In addition, they can support teachers in the classroom by working with pupils in key stage 3, take part in sporting activities or learn Mandarin Chinese for beginners. Students' leadership skills are further developed through joining the sixth-form leadership team or becoming subject ambassadors where they act as good role models for the subject in question. My meeting with the two members of staff who oversee careers education was fruitful. Students are carefully guided and supported whatever their destination. Students' destination information shows that many proceed to study at universities, including Oxford or Cambridge, and others move on to apprenticeships or employment.

You track all students' progress regularly and thoroughly, particularly those who are disadvantaged and in receipt of a bursary. You have focused sharply on subjects in which students underachieved in 2016. As a result of more intensive monitoring, challenge and support for staff, and the provision of more high-quality professional development, students' outcomes improved in the majority of subjects in 2017, compared to 2016. Notably, students made better progress in 2017 in English, mathematics, chemistry, physics, psychology and in government and politics. You exceeded the target you had set yourself regarding students' progress in 2017. However, you acknowledge that further improvements are required to bring progress in all subjects at least in line with the national average. Students' progress in vocational subjects is typically very strong. Form tutors play a major role in counselling and mentoring students and maintain a record of their development as

an individual.

Inspectors' visits to sixth-form lessons to observe students' learning and progress confirmed teachers' strong subject knowledge and good awareness of most students' individual learning needs. It was also evident that students are expected to problem-solve in lessons and to work out the answers for themselves, rather than being provided with them too quickly by their teachers. Some teaching does not yet consistently provide a sufficient degree of challenge, particularly for the most able students.

Members of the governing body share your commitment to make the sixth form highly effective. They articulated your plan in their meeting with me, and correctly identified the reasons why the provision did not get off to the best start. Reassuringly, they also understand what needs to be done to maintain and sustain the improvements and are able to speak knowledgeably about the impact of your actions to date.

Safeguarding is effective. Staff have received up-to-date training in all relevant safeguarding matters, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff have a very good awareness of issues which might compromise the safety of all pupils in the school, including students in the sixth form.

Inspectors' scrutiny of records relating to child protection shows that systems and procedures are thorough, and actions taken are logged in well-maintained records, including details of any resolution.

Staff who have responsibility for safeguarding are known by all employees and students, and their names are clearly displayed at various points throughout the school. Display boards targeting students publicise organisations that can provide guidance and support in relation to students' well-being, including their mental health.

### **External support**

The school maintains a positive relationship with the local authority. Representatives of the local authority are equally positive about the school and, in particular, the quality of the sixth-form provision.

The local authority conducted a review of the sixth form in December 2016 which was commissioned by the headteacher. This was followed by a visit to the school by the Department for Education in March 2017. Both visits referred to improvements in the sixth form provision, as well as identifying further areas for development. The school has taken both reports seriously and has plans in place to address the issues identified.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Continue to improve the progress pupils make, and eliminate any variation between subjects, by:
  - ensuring that teachers of all sixth-form subjects receive high-quality professional development
  - making sure that the most able students are consistently challenged through the teaching they receive
  - sharing the good practice that exists in subjects where students already make substantial progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the regional schools commissioner. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**