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Mrs Hilary Short
Headteacher
St Giles School
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Dear Mrs Short

Short inspection of St Giles School

Following my visit to the school on 13 January 2016, with Kevin McHenry, 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Since joining the school shortly prior to the last inspection, you have gained the respect of the school community and have been successful in your aim to raise expectations about what pupils can achieve. You and other leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection despite significant turbulence at senior leadership level.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They told inspectors that they like the staff and that they feel safe. 'The school is fantastic,' and 'I would not change anything about this school,' were typical comments from pupils to inspectors. Pupils also indicated their positive views of the school by their responses to members of staff during lessons and at lunchtime.

Your view is that the school remains a good school with outstanding early years provision and inspectors agree. However, we also agreed that there have been significant improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum since the last inspection. You have addressed the areas for development highlighted during the last inspection effectively.

Good teaching over time has led to improved outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. Outcomes in the early years are particularly strong and effective leadership has continued to improve the post-16 provision in order to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education, training or care.

You have made sure that staff have received high-quality training and development to improve their effectiveness. Teachers and teaching assistants have been able to access the same training and this has helped to improve standards in the classrooms. The lead professional for teaching and learning has been pivotal in ensuring that the teaching that pupils receive is appropriate to meet their individual needs.

Positive and respectful relationships between pupils and staff are a vital factor in the success of the school. St Giles School is a good place to be.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders take effective action to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements keep pupils safe and secure. Up-to-date policies, which take account of recent government guidance, are implemented well. The designated safeguarding lead attends regular training events and ensures that the staff receive the safeguarding information they need to support pupils and their families effectively.

The records held by the school regarding referrals to the designated safeguarding lead are well organised and demonstrate that the school is tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils. The governor responsible for safeguarding is a regular visitor to the school and she has closely monitored the quality of how referrals are managed.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors know the school well. The Chair of the Governing Body is appropriately experienced and she leads the governing body effectively. Governors are active participants in the life of the school and undertake regular visits in order to understand what pupils experience on a day-to-day basis. They hold the headteacher and other leaders to account for the work and outcomes of the school. Staff appreciate the interest that governors show in their work and this helps to motivate them further. Governors have worked hard to ensure the school website is up-to-date; however, the website is not compliant with all of the requirements specified by the Department for Education. The website needs to include the behaviour policy and further information about the governing body.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the arrangements for checking how well staff complete their roles are of a high quality. All staff have meetings with their line managers to discuss their performance and establish what must be improved. Personal targets, alongside whole-school areas for improvement, drive a comprehensive package of training and support for the staff team. Several members of staff reported to inspectors that school leaders are very good at recognising the individual strengths of colleagues and allowing them to flourish. The headteacher, assistant headteacher and acting assistant headteacher have complementary strengths. This means that they are an effective team that support each other and their colleagues well. On the rare occasions staff performance

falls below that expected; leaders do not shy away from difficult conversations in order to bring about the necessary improvements in staff performance.

- Since the last inspection there have been several changes to the leadership structure to improve its effectiveness. There are three phase leaders who are responsible for the early years and primary education, secondary, and post-16 education. These leaders have an excellent understanding of educational requirements, particularly the quality of the curriculum, teaching and the outcomes achieved, within their departments. Pupil outcomes are improving because leaders closely monitor pupil progress and improve the work of the staff in their respective departments.
- Leaders have a well thought-out strategy for assessing the progress of pupils and then monitoring their outcomes in English, mathematics and computing. Leaders and teachers use the knowledge that they have to develop effective plans to drive further improvement. Leaders have rightly identified that they need to analyse outcomes in all other subjects so they know that the next steps of school improvement are the right ones.
- Teaching is effective across the school. Pupils respond well to the targets set for them by their teachers and work is closely matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers are effective in deploying support staff to ensure that pupils make good progress in lessons. In the lessons where pupils make the most progress, questioning is extremely effective; staff allow pupils enough time to complete tasks and the independence of pupils is promoted well.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around school. Significant incidents of very poor behaviour are rare. Staff are well trained in how to de-escalate potentially difficult situations and clear plans are in place to respond appropriately to pupils who have challenging behaviours. The behaviour of pupils improves over the time that they are at the school.
- The attendance of most pupils is good. Pupil absence is always followed up using the schools' agreed procedure. This ensures that pupils are safe and that their attendance is improved.
- Individualised programmes and pathways are in place for learners in the post-16 phase. They help to build on pupils' prior learning and effectively support their transition to the next stage of their education, training or care.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- analysis of pupil outcomes in all subjects informs future planning

- teaching is of a consistently high quality at all times, resulting in rapid progress for all pupils in relation to their starting points.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, the assistant headteacher, the acting assistant headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. We considered 22 responses to the staff questionnaire and met formally with each of the phase leaders, representatives of the teaching team and support staff. We made 12 short visits to lessons. Six of these visits were conducted jointly with the lead professional for teaching and learning. Inspectors ate lunch with the pupils in the main dining hall and spoke with several pupils and staff members throughout the day. The views of parents were considered by inspectors looking at the 21 responses on Parent View. Seven of these responses included comments about their views regarding the schools' work. Inspectors evaluated recent information on pupils' progress and scrutinised other records about keeping pupils safe, their behaviour and attendance.