

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 July 2016

Mr Adrian Sugden
Headteacher
Sutherland House School
Bath Street
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG1 1DA

Dear Mr Sugden

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sutherland House School

Following my visit to your school on 30 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that governors put in place a clear plan for monitoring key aspects of the school's work on a regular basis.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, all other senior leaders, including lead therapists, the chair of the governing body and the chief executive of Autism East Midlands, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I toured

the whole of the school site and visited all of the classrooms with two members of your leadership team. I talked with pupils during the tour and at lunchtime. I considered documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching and reviewed information about the progress pupils are making. I met with representatives from the teaching and teaching assistant team.

Context

You joined the school as interim headteacher in March 2016. During the last inspection the school was located on five different sites across Nottinghamshire. Since the last inspection the school has relocated to one site in the centre of the city of Nottingham. The headteacher at the time of the last inspection has left the school.

Main findings

Quickly after the last inspection, leaders produced a 'teacher's pack' which outlined what they expected of teachers in regard to the planning and the delivery of lessons. This ensured there was a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to accelerate the progress that pupils make.

Since the previous inspection, the staff team have raised their expectations regarding what pupils can achieve. All staff spoken to during the inspection stated that the move to one site has improved the quality of discussions they are able to have with each other. Staff are now better placed to learn from one another. This is improving the quality of teaching and is continuing to raise the expectations staff have of the pupils.

Since the last inspection, a joint English and mathematics policy has been produced by leaders. This has helped staff to implement a more consistent approach to the teaching of these subjects. Leaders responsible for these subjects are currently reviewing how the curriculum is constructed so that pupils make maximum progress. Pupils are making better progress because teachers have an improving understanding about how to teach their pupils skills and knowledge in these key subjects.

At the time of the last inspection there were very limited processes for the performance management of staff. Since taking up post in March 2016, you have implemented a system of target setting for teachers. Another senior leader has been tenacious in setting up regular observations of teaching. The information gathered during these observations is informing the next stages of professional development for staff. You and your senior team are providing a good level of support for those staff who quickly need to develop their teaching skills. Your work in this area is improving the quality of teaching overall.

Better systems for tracking the progress groups of pupils make are now in place. Regular checks on pupils' progress are now built into the yearly calendar of activity. You and senior leaders are becoming confident in the information submitted to you by teachers. You believe that the information is now a true reflection of pupils' progress. The information you shared with me indicates that there are no concerns about the progress of any specific group of pupils. You agree with the areas for improvement highlighted by inspectors at the previous inspection and, as a result, you have created a culture of higher expectations for all year groups and in all classes.

The governing body took part in a comprehensive external review of their work in March 2016. The review correctly identifies that governors need to make more regular checks on the work of school leaders so that they can be certain that pupils are achieving well. Improved clarity about the role of the governing body, the board of trustees and the chief executive would greatly benefit the work of the school.

External support

You have created a successful partnership with a mainstream secondary school, Dearne Advanced Learning Centre in Rotherham. Senior staff from both schools now share information about their work in order to improve the quality of education at your school. Senior leaders at Sutherland House School are gaining in confidence and developing their professional skills because of this link.

You recognise the value of external support and you have also established a partnership with the Transform teaching school alliance.

Recent activity with local special schools, such as Rosehill School, is helping you and your leadership team to ensure that pupils' work is assessed correctly.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison
Her Majesty's Inspector