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Mr Tomas O Duibhir  
Headteacher  
Kingsley Special Academy  
Churchill Way  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire  
NN15 5DP

Dear Mr O Duibhir

### **Short inspection of Kingsley Special Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 2016 with Tracey Ydlibi, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be outstanding in September 2011.

### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, governors and leaders are highly evaluative of all aspects of the school's performance. You take action, based on your evaluations, to improve the provision you make for your pupils and to develop your practice further. Since the last inspection of your predecessor school, you recognised the challenges you were faced with, including changes in staffing and the increasing complexity of pupils' needs. You appointed and very effectively inducted new staff. You further developed staff understanding of the complex needs of your pupils and how to meet them. As a result, you sustained the school's very high standards. More recently, you have recognised the effectiveness of early years assessments and observations, supported by information technology, in enabling teachers to secure rapid progress for pupils. You plan to apply this approach to assessment practice throughout the school in order to improve effective whole-school assessment arrangements further. You have also recognised that you have not included actions to develop early years sufficiently well in the school improvement plan.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and all parents who spoke to inspectors or who completed Parent View reported that their child is happy at school. You have developed and sustained a strong sense of vision, values and ethos at Kingsley Special Academy. As a result, all those involved in the school have a highly developed understanding of each pupil as an individual and have the very highest aspirations for each of them. Staff are caring and have an acute desire for all pupils to succeed. You all want the very best for each child and work determinedly with children, families and other partners to achieve this. Leaders have developed year-round provision. Families are particularly appreciative of the additional support and respite the school provides for them, such as the holiday schemes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff keep pupils safe. Leaders have created a culture in which pupils' welfare is central to everything the school does. You have six trained designated safeguarding leads and they have ensured that all staff have been comprehensively trained. Consequently, staff are clear about how they must report safeguarding concerns and how the safeguarding team will deal with each referral. Leaders have improved the already effective safeguarding referrals and record system further with the introduction of an electronic system.

The safeguarding team is rigorous and meets regularly to review all open cases and recent referrals to ensure that everything is being done to keep the pupils safe. Consequently, on occasion, the safeguarding leads have had to be firm in their communications with partners, such as social services, who have been slow to take appropriate action. All the parents agreed that their children feel safe at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and governors took appropriate and effective action to address the area for improvement identified in the most recent inspection report of their predecessor school. They have ensured that systems for analysing children's learning and progress in the nursery are as rigorous as those in the rest of the school. You appointed a very experienced and knowledgeable early years lead who has very effectively led the development of this area. She ensures that children who are at risk of falling behind are identified as early as possible and additional support is provided for them. She then reviews this with teachers and support staff to evaluate the impact of the support and to check that the children, including those who are disadvantaged, are making rapid progress.

- Leaders and managers are highly evaluative in assessing the school's performance, and as a result, know the school exceptionally well. They ensure that evaluations, such as standards of teaching, are evidence based and all school improvement activity is evaluated in terms of the impact on standards or intended outcomes. Leaders are honest, self-critical and constantly looking to improve further. They formulate highly effective school improvement plans, implement them rigorously and evaluate the impact assiduously. This has resulted in leaders sustaining very high levels of performance despite changes to staffing and the increasing complexity of pupils' need. However, leaders have not ensured that the priorities for improvement in the early years are represented in the school improvement plan in sufficient detail.
- The governors are highly effective and know the school very well. They are well informed about pupils' outcomes, strengths of the school and what needs to be improved next. They challenge and support leaders very well. For example, they question school leaders rigorously and expect all reports to show the impact of actions taken. For example, one governor is working confidently with leaders to ensure that their evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding is sufficiently detailed and accessible to parents.
- Outcomes are outstanding. This is because leaders have ensured that staff have exceptionally high expectations of what all pupils and all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged, can achieve. Consequently, leaders and teachers set challenging targets for pupils.
- Leaders and teachers track pupils' progress rigorously, and in considerable detail, against a range of indicators related to pupils' individual needs and curriculum areas. Staff use this information to identify those pupils who are at risk of falling behind in order to revise the provision they make for them, including additional support. Staff then monitor the pupil's progress regularly to check that they are catching up.
- Pupils make rapid progress on entry to the school from their different starting points. They sustain high levels of progress and attain exceptionally well. For example, the proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding expected progress from their very low starting points is very high. In English and mathematics, most pupils met or exceeded expectations.
- The school's excellent multi-professional work with pupils and their families ensures that pupils are exceptionally well supported and prepared for the next stage in their learning. For example, pupils with attachment needs transition securely and successfully into their next school.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well, given their complex needs, because of the high expectations of adults and the consistent implementation of the behaviour policy. Pupils, even those with the most complex learning needs, respond immediately to teachers' requests and instructions. At breaktimes, pupils play well together and at lunchtime, the dining hall is calm and orderly.

- Staff implement the school's behaviour policy and protocols very effectively because they have a deep understanding of pupils' needs and they provide highly effective support to pupils. As a result, pupils achieve very high levels of development in all aspects of their learning. Given that pupils have very complex needs, the progress they make in improving their behaviour over time is exceptional. When pupils' behaviour requires additional support, they receive it promptly and it is highly effective in enabling pupils to calm quickly and return to their learning as soon as possible.
- Middle leaders analyse pupils' progress information well. As a result of their comprehensive monitoring, they are able to formulate detailed subject action plans and to provide effective feedback and advice to colleagues. This has enabled colleagues to sustain their high standards of teaching and develop further their capacity to effectively meet the increasingly complex needs of their pupils.
- Leaders have used performance management of all staff, including pay progression, very effectively to secure highly effective teaching and excellent outcomes for pupils. Leaders ensure that performance management is evidence based and place a value on pupil performance information compared with challenging targets. Performance management targets reflect the high expectations of pupil care and progress, standards of teaching, professional development and the school's improvement priorities.
- Leaders have sustained the outstanding provision despite significant changes in staffing and increasingly complex needs of the pupils. They have done this by providing a comprehensive induction package for all new staff. At the heart of this support is a 14-session programme spread over the first two terms in post, which is led by resident experts. Staff are also provided with mentors, coaching and opportunities to team-teach. As a result, staff have developed quickly to the level expected at Kingsley Special Academy.
- You have ensured that leadership capacity has also been developed. You have used the performance management system to identify potential leaders among school staff and have appointed strong leaders to the school. In addition to the comprehensive induction programme available to all staff, middle leaders have also received bespoke professional development such as 'Building leaders for the future' provided by the Maplefields Teaching Alliance or the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) or National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL). As a result, middle leaders feel valued and empowered to support you as you develop your outstanding school further.
- Teachers know pupils' needs exceptionally well and plan learning activities that consider the needs of all individuals. The high expectations and well-established routines of teachers and learning support assistants enable pupils to learn extremely effectively.

- Staff provide exceptionally high-quality learning environments and very well-organised resources to meet the needs of learners with a wide range of often-complex needs. Teachers ensure that all pupils are challenged whatever their level of ability and need. They question skilfully to develop language and vocabulary and to deepen pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils develop resilience because teachers move their learning on rapidly, checking their understanding and correcting mistakes sensitively.
- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are exceptionally well cared for, and as a result, pupils develop into confident and enthusiastic learners. Teachers teach pupils how to be safe, such as by showing pupils how to use the computer safely or how to use a knife safely when preparing food. Pupils recognise poor behaviour and have been taught about bullying. They know what to do about it if it should happen.
- Leaders have sustained and developed a highly effective family support team that support both pupils and their families so that pupils can attend school and engage in their learning. For example, Camp Kingsley provides pupils with an exciting opportunity to spend a night away from home, and families with respite.
- Leaders have also ensured that the provision in the early years has been developed further. Children benefit from extremely well-resourced, attractive, stimulating and interesting learning spaces and curriculum. The approach to learning and organisation of the learning areas enable children to play and learn independently. Adults support their learning extremely well and provide activities that stimulate children's interest. For example, one Nursery child found an insect, named it 'Bella the bug' and proudly showed it to the adults. She then, independently, used the available resources to identify Bella as a woodlouse.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they use their evaluation of early years assessment practice to improve assessment further across the school
- the school improvement plan clearly sets out the improvements to be made in the early years.

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

Yours sincerely

Derek Myers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the business manager, the parent support worker, two governors and the school improvement partner. Inspectors also met with members of staff and took account of the responses to the staff survey. I reviewed your current school self-evaluation and your improvement plan. Inspectors visited classrooms and learning areas to observe teaching, talk to pupils and look at their work. You accompanied an inspector on visits to classrooms. Inspectors evaluated information about pupils' progress, attendance and exclusion. I met with three of the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed your systems, processes and records relating to safeguarding. I met with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and we considered their views alongside the responses from Parent View. I also reviewed the school's website.