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Mrs Janet Thompson
Headteacher
Dorothy Goodman School
Stoke Rd
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Dear Mrs Thompson

Short inspection of Dorothy Goodman School.

Following my visit to the school with Peter Bell, Ofsted Inspector, on 14 June 2016, 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 outstanding in June 2011.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since joining the school in September 2013, you have led the school with determination and rigour. You successfully communicate your vision for continuing improvement at the school and as a result standards have risen further still since the previous inspection. You have extremely high expectations of yourself, governors and of all staff. You are deeply ambitious for all of your pupils and this has raised the level of expectation across the school. The staff say that there is a greater sense of accountability for their actions. The staff and governors also say that you genuinely value their ideas and give everyone the opportunity to contribute to the school's plans for on-going improvement. You work effectively with the governors to ensure that the school has the resources needed to support the complex needs of the pupils.

The quality of the relationships between the staff, pupils and families remains a strength of the provision. There is a warm and family atmosphere throughout the school and it is clear that the pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at Dorothy Goodman.

There can be no doubt to anyone who knows the school that the needs of the pupils and the families are central to every aspect of the school's work. You know and understand the needs of all pupils in the school impressively well. Consequently, you are able to support and challenge staff effectively to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to do the very best they can, whatever their ability or stage of development.

The teaching in the school is outstanding. It is characterised by skilful planning which ensures that pupils have the support needed to enable them to take risks in their learning. You proudly gave me examples of how the pupils surprise everyone with their outstanding achievements, be it in relation to their physical mobility, communication skills or any other aspect of their learning. One boy who was unable to use any expressive communication at the start of the school year is now confidently using symbols to make sure that his voice is heard. He skilfully and determinedly used the correct symbols in the correct order to tell the inspector 'I want to go to the sparkle/sensory room'.

The pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their individual starting points is outstanding. You are passionate that pupils of all ages have the opportunity to develop skills which will equip them for life beyond Dorothy Goodman. As a result, post-16 students have rich opportunities to continue to develop their communication, literacy and numeracy skills in their final years at the school. The students told the inspector how the work they do in school helps them to be confident in their work experience placements and to write letters of application for jobs.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school leaders take effective action to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements keep pupils safe. The governors and senior leaders ensure that policies and practice meet current requirements and are understood fully by all staff. As a result, staff can talk about recent training which they have received and are clear about the agreed procedures for reporting and recording any concerns.

The physical premises of the school are well managed and well organised. As a result, the complex mobility needs which some pupils have are met well and all pupils can safely access all parts of the school site. There is particularly close and effective supervision at times when the pupils arrive and leave the school which ensures that everyone is safe.

The leaders secure an impressive balance of ensuring that the complex medical and health needs of pupils are met fully while also enabling the pupils to access the full range of in-school and after-school activities which the school provides.

Inspection findings

- The headteacher and current senior leadership team have continued to build on the school's legacy of outstanding care and support for the pupils while bringing a new rigour and level of aspiration for pupils' independence and academic achievement. As a result, some of the most able pupils are able to follow programmes of work in line with their appropriate key stage of education and during the past two years individual pupils have secured unsupported employment when they leave the school.
- The governing body is single minded in its determination to continually improve the school and ensures that the needs of pupils take central stage to all aspects of the school's work. The governors actively support the work of senior leaders to improve the attendance of pupils. The rates of attendance at the school overall are above the national average although the leaders recognise that there is more to be done to continue to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- The headteacher is highly reflective about all aspects of the school's work and has effectively supported the governors and the other senior leaders to be equally analytical of the impact of their actions on pupil outcomes. For example, the governors told me that as the result of, 'a warts and all discussion about what we were doing well and not so well', the governors realised that the school was not doing enough to communicate effectively with parents. Consequently, they have introduced new systems for communication including a weekly newsletter, the attendance of parent governors at parents' evenings and the formation of a parents working group. The feedback to governors from the parents indicates that the parents feel that communication is improving.
- Staff morale is high. Typical comments from staff include, 'This is a brilliant place to work' and 'There is a reason for everything we do.'
- The quality of teaching at each of the school sites is of an equally high standard. This is because the senior leaders ensure that the school's agreed systems for teaching, learning and assessment are consistently followed wherever the pupils are based, be it at lower site, one of the satellite bases at the three neighbouring mainstream schools or the upper school site. For example, for all pupils from the early years through to key stage 4, teachers ensure that information relating to each pupils' communication, access and learning needs, are on display in each classroom for all staff to follow on a daily basis. As a result, all adults are sharply focused in their work with each pupil and if there are occasional unavoidable changes to staffing, everyone is still aware of how they need to support and interact with the pupils.
- The subject leaders model outstanding teaching and strong subject knowledge. As a result the teaching of English and mathematics across the school has continued to improve and the expectations of what the pupils can and should achieve have been raised. However, some leaders are relatively new to their roles and there are still some inconsistencies in the rigour and confidence with which some leaders monitor the quality of teaching and identify next steps for the further development of their subject.

- The school carefully tracks the progress of all pupils. The headteacher ensures that information about the pupils' progress is shared on a regular basis with the governing body and since the previous inspection, there has been a heightened culture of accountability across the school. The staff are clear that while they feel valued and supported by the senior leaders they are also now held to closer account for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The school's assessment information indicates that pupils make good or outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning and development during their time at the school. The school's information for this current year indicates that the pupils are making similar rates of progress in reading and writing and slightly better progress in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- The curriculum is ambitious and for the most part extremely well planned. The leaders have recently widened the range of activities to develop pupils' expressive communication and writing. The staff say that they now expect more of pupils. The work in pupils' books at key stage 2 and key stage 3 shows that pupils take great pride in their written work. The most able pupils are able to form letters correctly and can construct their own sentences and simple stories. In the early years and key stage 1, the classroom environment successfully motivates the pupils to take part in a wide range of language activities. However, the outdoor environment is not planned sufficiently to promote the children's interest in letters, words or books.
- The provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is another of the school's many strengths. The effective partnership working between the teachers, teaching assistants and specialist staff from health and therapy services ensures that the needs of these pupils are met exceptionally well. The teachers also ensure that lessons and activities for these pupils are well planned and as a result the pupils make impressive progress. For example, in one class, two pupils with profound communication and physical needs were able to confidently express their choices and engage in meaningful communication with the adults. The staff had a deep understanding of the pupils' needs and abilities and the leaders had ensured that appropriate electronic systems to support the pupils' communication were in place.
- The provision for post-16 students, while always being a strength of the school, is improving further still. The school has worked hard over the past two years to broaden the opportunities for work experience. The staff know each of the pupils extremely well and identify programmes of work and access to courses which build on the pupils' individual interests and abilities. As a result, the pupils work hard and are impressively well-prepared for the next stage of their training, education or work. The school has established ambitious and successful links with local businesses and industry. The school now has a classroom base at the National Grid offices in Hinckley which enables pupils to gain the confidence and skills essential for future employment and involvement in the wider community.
- The vast majority of pupils are extremely well behaved in lessons, play times and as they move around the school. The senior leaders have created an

environment where the pupils are supported to take responsibility for their actions and the school's agreed approaches to promoting positive behaviour are consistently followed by all staff.

- The culture of genuine care and mutual respect underpins all relationships in the school and it is clear that pupils, staff and governors are justifiably proud to be part of Dorothy Goodman School.

Next steps for the school:

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the outdoor learning environment in the early years and key stage 1 pupils is improved so that it supports the development of pupils skills in communication, reading and writing more effectively
- there is a consistent approach to the way in which subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and that next steps for the on-going development of every subject are precise and measurable.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clare Cossor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection the inspector met with you, the other senior leaders, the school business manager, and representatives from the governing body and school staff. The inspectors observed the pupils during their lessons and lunch and playtimes. We met informally with a number of parents and made visits to a number of classes on three of the school's sites. The inspectors considered a range of documentation including information about pupils' progress, and safeguarding policies and records.