

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



8 December 2016

Mrs Samantha Benson  
Headteacher  
Lisburne School  
Half Moon Lane  
Offerton  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
SK2 5LB

Dear Mrs Benson

### **Short inspection of Lisburne School**

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 2016 with Ann Gill, 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 outstanding in May 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have continued to drive excellence across the school and staff embrace your ethos of high aspirations for all. Your dynamic leadership provides a clear vision for the future of the school and staff trust your innovations. As a result, staff are confident, outward looking and consistently willing to take a leap of faith with new initiatives to propel pupils' achievements further. The school community works together, as a well-oiled machine, to ensure that pupils succeed in all key stages. You have an eye for spotting talent in your staff and capturing their skills, interests and enthusiasm. Consequently, a wide range of subjects and activities are taught across the school and a range of staff contribute to whole-school training. Your forward thinking and future planning has ensured that the school is growing, evolving and coping well with the continued demands for places across the local authority. The recent restructuring of governance and the expansion of your leadership team has provided you with a firm springboard to launch the school to further success. Your strong senior leaders have a clear focus on ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment blossom across the school and drive up pupils' achievement and development.

The school environment is highly cared for, and staff take pride in ensuring that learning environments are of the highest standard. Pupils' learning and work is celebrated on walls and corridors across the school, building pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, the school is bright, vibrant and colourful and a warm

and caring place to learn. Parents were complimentary about the environment and atmosphere of the school. They recognised the 'extra mile' that staff go in order to support their children in their learning and development.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and lessons are exciting, fun and purposeful. Staff ensure that no time is wasted in lessons and ensure that pupils' needs are very well met. A culture of high expectation permeates the school. As a result, pupils are thirsty learners and make exemplary progress across the school. There is a calm atmosphere in the school. Members of staff are well trained to deal with any challenging behaviour efficiently and without fuss. Therapists work efficiently alongside teachers so that pupils are engaged in activities which meet both their learning and their health and development needs.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's systems for child protection are very effectively led by senior leaders and the designated safeguarding lead. All staff involved are well versed in their responsibilities and have a clear understanding of current guidance and legislation. Leaders communicate highly effectively with all staff and ensure that safeguarding is a high priority across the school. There are effective communication systems at the school that enable rapid action to be taken whenever child protection issues arise. Safeguarding arrangements and procedures operate smoothly and leaders have ensured that staff and governors receive timely and appropriate training in child protection and safeguarding issues. The school's safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website, is clear and informative. Staff are vigilant and alert to danger. The school site is safe and secure. A high number of pupils travel to and from school by organised transportation and leaders have ensured that this is well organised and that pupils are safeguarded from risks. A number of leaders and governors have completed safer recruitment training; they ensure that appropriate checks on staff are thorough and rigorous from the point when they are recruited.

Pupils know who to turn to for support, or if any concerns arise. Pupils are regularly taught to look for hazard signs to keep themselves safe when outside on visits and trips. Members of the school council spoke clearly to inspectors on how to keep safe from fire and the dangers of using the internet. Leaders use a variety of approaches to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the potential risks associated with going online. For example, clear picture posters of how to keep safe on the internet are used to ensure that reading is not a barrier to clear communication.

A well-established and effective school team, the 'family liaison coordinators', work closely with families so that safeguarding of pupils reaches out beyond the school gate. They also provide training and support for parents. This 'wrap-around care' is highly valued by parents and has pupils' development and safety as its core value.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders ensure that pupils and families experience a happy, supportive and welcoming school with expert staff that nurture pupils' development. Pupils

benefit from the excellent facilities and range of therapy on offer within the school. As a result, pupils' academic, personal and physical development is very well supported. Pupils flourish because they are given the skills to overcome their very specific difficulties. For example, I observed excited pupils engaging in a sensory story lesson with staff tailoring motor challenges, strength and coordination to match pupils' needs and requirements.

- Lisburne School shares a campus with a mainstream primary school and a Nursery. You have established strong links and work closely with the mainstream primary school. The most able pupils have the opportunity to attend selected mainstream lessons to boost their learning and confidence. However, pupils would benefit from further joint ventures to support their development, achievement and socialisation.
- Leaders have established clear and robust assessment systems across the school. They are aware of the new recommendations for pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum and are poised to ensure that their assessment model complies with government recommendations.
- Leaders and staff have highly detailed knowledge about pupils in the school and their individual needs and circumstances. This enables them to pinpoint exactly what each pupil needs in order to make the best possible progress. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants because learning plans are shared and well thought out to ensure that pupils make small but significant steps in progress.
- Leaders have ensured that highly effective systems are in place to track and monitor pupils' small but significant steps and achievements. All staff are swift in ensuring that interventions are successful. Consequently, there are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils from different backgrounds, or other groups of special educational needs. All pupils achieve equally well and make strong progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by additional funding make better progress than their classmates. Staff know their individual needs and difficulties well. Leaders ensure that they use the additional funding effectively to provide well-focused additional support and therapies which successfully help their learning and behaviour. No meaningful comparison is possible between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' communication skills progress well across the school because staff are highly skilled and pupils benefit from additional speech and language therapy. A wide range of communication devices are used to ensure that pupils are able to communicate effectively.
- Leaders are keen to involve parents in continual communication. Investment in online software provides teachers with the platform to share photographs and videos of pupils' daily steps in development. This has encouraged some parents to use these same approaches at home, supporting continuity. As a result, pupils' learning is boosted, along with parental confidence.
- Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that pupils at the end of key stage 2 make successful transitions to their chosen school. A dedicated staff team ensure that a wide range of rich, well-organised programmes are in place. Family liaison coordinators work effectively with families and ensure that parents' choices match pupils' needs. As a result, pupils and families are well informed and they choose the right provision for their child's next steps. Any uncertainties and fears

are dispelled before their arrival in Year 7. For example, pupils make regular visits to their new school and photographs and video reminders are used to familiarise pupils and reduce the anxiety about change.

- Leaders take great care to ensure that arrangements for pupils to move class are carefully planned, with clear communication between teachers. Information regarding pupils' learning styles, assessments and health and welfare is transferred effectively to the next teacher. Parents and pupils are provided with a plethora of opportunities to meet new staff and visit their new classroom environment so that they feel reassured and familiarised.
- Governors are passionate about the school and have extensive relevant expertise that they bring to bear on their roles. Governors use their rich skills to challenge and support the school effectively. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governing body meetings are well attended. Records of meetings show clear and appropriate challenge to school leaders. They make good use of the information they receive on pupils' progress, as well as their visits to the school, in order to ensure their requests are well focused.
- Parents recognise the positive impact that the school has on pupils and consider the school to be very well led. All of the parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their child is very well looked after. Many parents speak admiringly of the school and recognise the efforts of staff to ensure that their children thrive and achieve. There were several positive comments regarding the school's work including, 'A wonderful caring staff and environment', 'My child has already made so much progress in all areas of her education', 'This is a jewel of a school.'
- 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:

- current assessment systems are adapted in response to the government recommendations for pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum
- they take further opportunities for establishing joint ventures with their campus mainstream school to support pupils' development and achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Dawn Platt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Information about the inspection

- Meetings took place with you, your senior leaders, members of the governing body, members of staff and a group of parents. We also met with a local authority adviser linked to the school and members of the school council.
- Short visits were made to a number of lessons, most of which were made jointly with a member of the senior leadership team, to observe teaching and look at pupils' learning development.
- We also observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in lessons, around school and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- We scrutinised a range of supporting documentation about safeguarding and child protection, the school's self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement plans, minutes of governors' meetings, records related to attendance, and information relating to pupils' achievement.
- We took into account 12 responses from parents on Ofsted's free text service. We also considered 29 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- This inspection particularly focused on a number of key questions:
  - Do leaders track and monitor pupils' developments and achievements effectively across the school and intervene appropriately to ensure outstanding outcomes for all?
  - Are pupils safeguarded and are staff kept up to date with the current legislation for safeguarding?
  - Are governors holding the school to account effectively and are they ensuring that they carry out their statutory responsibilities?
  - Do leaders ensure that pupils' next steps are well matched to their needs so that they continue to flourish and achieve well beyond key stage 2?
  - Is transition between year groups well supported so there is no loss of learning?
  - Are staff provided with professional development that supports pupils' achievement further?