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2 February 2017

Ms Amanda Rowley
The Wavell School
Lynchford Road
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Dear Ms Rowley

Short inspection of The Wavell School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2017 with Anna Lawrence, 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your principled and aspirational leadership embeds a culture of strong pastoral care and high academic standards. The school's 'care to challenge' motto encapsulates appropriately the day-to-day work of your school community. Wavell is a harmonious school where everyone pulls together to do their best. A recent visitor described coming to your school as like joining 'a large family'. You have high expectations and take decisions based on what is right for your pupils and the community, even when those decisions are challenging.

This is a very inclusive school, where each pupil's progress and personal development really matters. Pupils make good progress across the curriculum as a result of good teaching and support. They are appropriately challenged and want to do well. Pupils of all abilities participate well in focused and purposeful lessons. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and cooperate well with their teachers and classmates. They are friendly, polite, courteous, and conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Leaders monitor pupils' progress and welfare closely. Where concerns arise, pupils receive carefully targeted support to get them back on track.

Since the last inspection, the school continues to perform well. Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement successfully, so that:

- teaching is consistently effective, and ensures that pupils make good progress in most of their subjects

- you and other leaders, including subject leaders, check the quality of teaching regularly and accurately, and provide useful support to teachers that helps them improve their work further
- pupils are challenged appropriately to work hard and do their very best.

You, your leadership team and governors understand clearly the key priorities for further improvement. Your comprehensive and detailed school improvement plan involves all leaders in planning for improvement. You know that, while most pupils achieve well, a small group of disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not make as much progress as others. The pastoral care for these pupils remains excellent, but they need very focused support to maximise their progress in lessons. Leaders need to look more closely at how effectively their actions are improving teaching and pupils' outcomes, so that improvements are sustained.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding and pastoral care are the foundation of this school. Pupils feel safe and strongly value the support they receive. Staff know the pupils and their families very well, and a strong culture of working in partnership prevails. Teams focus regularly on the needs of specific pupils, provide extra help when needed and check carefully the difference that their work makes. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates, and have a very good understanding of the risk factors in the local community. The curriculum prepares pupils well for managing their own safety in their current and future lives. A particular focus recently has been on cyber bullying and its impact on mental health. The pupils we spoke to had a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

Leaders and key staff are highly skilled and effective. They share their expertise by training and supporting staff in other schools with their work on child protection and with vulnerable pupils. You continue to provide exceptional support for the school's military children and their families. Crucially, leaders and governors have no sense of complacency and are committed to maintaining the strong systems and ethos which currently exist.

Inspection findings

- Leaders track rigorously the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They use a wide range of strategies to accelerate their progress. Expectations of disadvantaged pupils and the standard of their work are comparable with other pupils in the school. Disadvantaged pupils now make good progress, and the differences in achievement compared with other pupils in the school are beginning to diminish.
- For the last three years, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been well below the national average. Individual case studies highlight the complex needs of some of these pupils and the high level of support that the school provides for them. Despite notable improvements in some year groups, the overall attendance for this group of pupils remains stubbornly low. Leaders acknowledge that this

remains a key improvement priority.

- The school provides strong pastoral support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders support teachers to develop effective classroom strategies to accelerate learning for these pupils. For example, in English, the teacher effectively used a range of support tools, including careful questioning, to focus and challenge pupils. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making slightly more rapid progress.
- Leaders check carefully on the progress of individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and know what each pupil needs to do to move forward with their learning. More detailed and systematic, rigorous checking would help leaders identify the effectiveness of additional help. Governors recognise that accelerating the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a key priority and challenge leaders about the impact of their actions towards this.
- Leaders prioritise improving the quality of teaching, and their actions make a positive difference. Staff feel well supported and take part in a range of developmental activities that improve their practice. Middle leaders coach teachers routinely and use school systems well to check that teaching remains consistently effective.
- In lessons, teachers have high expectations, plan tasks that provide high levels of challenge and encourage pupils to participate well. Pupils know their targets for learning. Teachers use questioning increasingly effectively to challenge pupils and probe their understanding.
- School leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils have the best possible opportunities when they leave school. For the last two years, every pupil from The Wavell School has achieved a place in either further education, employment or an apprenticeship. This is a considerable achievement of which the school is rightly proud. Pupils express high aspirations about their future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they use information about the progress of key groups even more sharply to measure the impact of their actions and plan appropriate extra help for those who need it
- more teaching targets support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities systematically, so that their progress accelerates further
- work to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance remains a priority, so that they attend school more regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Bagust
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I talked to you and your deputy headteacher about your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and your plans for improvement. I met with other senior leaders to discuss the progress of current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and the leadership of teaching and learning. I met with governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. The team inspector reviewed safeguarding procedures and records and met with the special educational needs coordinator, the leader responsible for behaviour and attendance, and groups of pupils from all year groups. We visited lessons jointly with senior and middle leaders, visiting English, mathematics, science, history, design and technology, and modern foreign languages. We reviewed a range of documents including leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, improvement plans and pupils' progress information. We considered 153 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, 73 responses to the staff survey and three responses to the pupil survey.