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3 April 2017

Ms Erica Dennies  
Headteacher  
Nether Hall School  
Keyham Lane West  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
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Dear Ms Dennies

### **Short inspection of Nether Hall School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 March 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Jo Ward, 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 January 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the governing board and senior leaders have maintained the positive and enjoyable place of learning noted at the previous inspection. Since the last inspection, you have moved into a new purpose built school. Your well-considered approach to the design of this new building has enabled pupils to make more progress with their independence skills.

Typically, over time, the pupils make good progress and achieve well. As a result of the last inspection, you were asked to promote more opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills, by making sure that equipment to support this, including symbols and pictures, are easily accessible around the school. You have effectively addressed this issue and we observed pupils having access to a wide range of communication systems to support their learning. This area of your work is now very effective.

There are trusting relationships between staff and pupils. This ensures that pupils are happy at school and feel confident to try new things. The staff know the pupils exceptionally well and challenge pupils to do their best.

Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent commented via Parent View, 'I could not be happier with the quality of the education that my child receives. The staff are extremely dedicated, understand my child's needs really well and work creatively and flexibly to meet these needs.'

Several members of staff made comments via their survey, such as 'all staff and students are lovely', 'the school is well led, the senior staff are very approachable and make time to listen to any issues' and 'staff are encouraged and supported in their professional development'. All of these comments are typical of the vast majority of those received by inspectors.

The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school. Any challenging behaviour is managed extremely well. The overall attendance of pupils is a weakness. Senior leaders work with a determined attitude to ensure that pupils are at school as much as they possibly can be. The governing board continue to hold senior leaders to account for this aspect of their work.

Pupils on the 16 to 19 study programme are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life. All pupils leave school and go on to college courses or into social care day services. Members of staff work effectively with pupils in order to support them with the transition into their post-school life.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Concerns about pupils are quickly acted upon by the staff team. Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff are clear about how to report their worries. Tenacious leaders use their electronic recording system well to secure quick actions to keep children safe.

Senior leaders have put in place robust systems for the recruitment of staff. The necessary checks are completed on adults new to the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils. Senior leaders and governors are well trained to lead this process.

The building has been thoughtfully designed to ensure the safety of pupils. Corridors, classrooms and outside areas are well maintained and allow pupils to move around the school safely and, where appropriate, independently.

The regular training of staff in different aspects of safeguarding ensures that they remain vigilant to act upon any concerns about pupil welfare. Inspectors agree with one member of the staff team's comment, 'the well-being of our students is first and foremost'.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils are making good progress across a range of subjects. There are no significant gaps in the progress of any group of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium funding. The plans used to promote the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium are sufficient but would benefit from being more sharply focused on how the additional support will benefit individual pupils. Children who access the early years provision experience a good range of activities which promote their learning well.

- Pupils' progress is promoted because teachers set good targets for pupils that are focused on priorities for their learning. Extra support is targeted at the pupils who need this the most. School leaders ensure that this work has a positive impact on the progress pupils make.
- The curriculum enables pupils, including those in the early years, to build upon their previous learning. Pupils access a range of subjects which engage them in meaningful activities. The checks made on the progress pupils make across the curriculum are mostly thorough. Where this is done well, further opportunities for pupils to make increased progress are offered to pupils, such as through sporting activities. The leadership team demonstrate a strong desire to ensure that this high-quality work is completed across all subject areas.
- Over many years, you have provided the school with high-quality leadership. In collaboration with other senior leaders, you have established excellent systems and led the school very well. During your recent absence from school, other senior leaders continued your good work. As a result of everyone's work, the school has remained a positive place to be for pupils.
- The governing board are effective in their work. The chair of the board is astute and passionate about the work of the school. Governors are active in the life of the school and provide a good level of support and challenge to the senior leaders.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of pupils improves
- the curriculum provides further opportunities for pupils' talents to be developed
- there is a clearer link between the additional funding provided through the pupil premium and the progress individual pupils make.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders. We met with the chair of the governing board and a representative of Leicester local authority. We made a series of visits to lessons jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leaders.

Inspectors discussed the work of the school with pupils and staff throughout the inspection. We looked at examples of pupils' work, including files related to how staff track the progress that pupils make.

We looked at the views of parents expressed using Parent View and others collected through surveys carried out by the school. We were able to speak with a small number of parents at the start of the school day. The views of 54 staff who completed the Ofsted survey were taken into account.

We looked at a range of safeguarding records, a range of policy documents and the school's information about the current progress of the pupils.