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Mr Liam Dowling
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Dear Mr Dowling

Short inspection of Hinderton School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2017 with Bernard Robinson 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

Hinderton School is a joy to be a part of, whether you are a pupil, parent or member of staff. You make sure that everyone, from the youngest pupil to the most experienced teacher, gets the help they need to be the very best they can be.

Together with your senior leaders, you have taken the school from strength to strength since the previous inspection. Your professional curiosity means that you never rest on your laurels. You keep up to date with the latest developments, nationally and internationally, so that you can bring the very best practice to Hinderton. You will not settle for second best. As a school, you invest heavily in the highest quality professional training. This investment pays dividends. The consistently strong teaching across school achieves outstanding outcomes for your pupils.

There is no glass ceiling for your pupils. You make sure that from their very first day, every pupil follows their own personalised pathway through the school. You make sure that those pupils who have the potential to reintegrate into a mainstream school are given every chance of success. You are alert to any potential barriers for your pupils. Your team refuse to be thwarted. They work tirelessly with staff, pupils and their families to find solutions so that every pupil realises their full

potential.

Hinderton's success is a genuine team effort. You make sure that everyone has a chance to share their ideas and air their views. No one works in isolation. Consequently, the school's effectiveness is not diminished by any staff changes. Many of your team have built their career at Hinderton, others aspired to work at Hinderton long before they secured a post. Hinderton's success is built on firm foundations.

At the previous inspection, the inspector asked you to review the purpose and format of pupils' plans to avoid unnecessary duplication of recording and monitoring. You carried out a comprehensive 'root and branch' review of your systems before you made any decisions. You embraced the opportunities afforded to you by the national changes to the curriculum and assessment to make improvements which go well beyond those suggested by the inspector. At Hinderton, both curriculum and assessment are bespoke to your school. Your online systems, which work seamlessly together, make sure that senior leaders, staff and parents all have the information they need at their fingertips. As a result, you have streamlined and improved all aspects of information relating to pupils.

At Hinderton, you have focused on meeting the needs of every pupil. The changes you have made since the previous inspection have ensured that every pupil succeeds. You have taken decisive and effective action to improve the attendance of your pupils. Governors and senior leaders recognise that the next step is to reconsider the common barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and girls. You have improved the quality of information you have about these pupils. You are keen to use this information to check whether there are issues unique to each of these groups which you could address more strategically.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Robust checks are carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Comprehensive training ensures that all staff follow up assiduously on any concerns. The school works well with its external partners. Record-keeping is meticulous. Staff are alert to any bullying and take decisive action when needed. Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Inspection findings

- Parents are unanimous in their view that Hinderton is a 'fantastic' school. One parent captured the views of the community when they wrote that 'not only are the children looked after amazingly, the parents are too.'
- You have devised a curriculum which meets the needs of your pupils extremely well. You have made sure that you have achieved the right balance in your blend of academic and essential skills. Your subject leaders use the wealth of information available to evaluate how well their subjects are being taught. This close eye means that you are quick to identify and address any gaps or overlaps

in curriculum coverage. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' strong outcomes.

- Parents are genuine partners in their children's learning. The online learning journals used across the school mean that parents are kept up to date with their children's learning. Moreover, parents can post photos and messages to share their children's successes at home with teachers.
- Pupils make strong progress from their different starting points. You and your team are determined for your pupils to achieve the best they can. Teachers closely track pupils' progress against their targets. Teachers use this information to great effect in their lesson planning. Not a moment is wasted in the school day. However, you are not complacent. Recently, governors asked you whether pupils' targets were aspirational enough, given that every pupil met or exceeded their target. You did not simply set higher targets, but you checked the pupils' baseline assessments to make sure that they were giving an accurate starting point.
- Governors recognise the challenge they have keeping up with you. The governing body makes sure it has the right skills, experience and expertise to contribute to the school's improvement. They are committed to getting the very best for Hinderton's pupils. Governors check on the impact of their decisions by inviting pupils into their meetings. They ask pupils to report on new initiatives such as the bucket therapy and outdoor learning. Your honesty and transparency mean that governors and leaders work well together.
- You make sure that you share your expertise with local schools. You are a strategic partner in the local teaching school alliance as well as the chair in the Cheshire Special Schools Consortium. As a small school, you recognise the strength of being part of a group. These partnerships are benefiting both staff and pupils in myriad ways. Local headteachers willingly collaborate with you to reintegrate any of your pupils into their mainstream classes. As a group of schools, you are able to find more cost-effective ways of buying in trainers who are world leaders in their field.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should further refine the school's plans so that they focus more sharply on all groups of pupils making even more rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, teaching and support staff. An inspector met with the chair and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors also spoke to two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. An inspector talked to parents at the start of the school day.
- An inspector met formally with a group of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. We made visits to classrooms and conducted a work scrutiny with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and action plan as well as a range of other documentation.
- Inspectors conducted a review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, training records, recruitment checks and record-keeping.