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16 October 2017

Mrs Philippa Clark
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clark

Short inspection of Ravenswood School

Following my visit to the school on 28 September 2017 with Karen Gannon, 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 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 have accurately identified what the school needs to work on to improve so that pupils continue to achieve well. You have ensured that leaders, governors and staff have all worked well together to make the school even better. Governors regularly visit to see for themselves how well the school is run. They use this information to provide a good level of challenge and support to leaders. Leaders have raised their expectations of what pupils can do as a result.

Pupils and staff find you very approachable, and appreciate that you always try to address any concerns they have. You and your team have made the school a safe and welcoming place where pupils enjoy learning. Many pupils show signs of visible delight when they arrive at school in the morning. Staff have very positive relationships with pupils. This helps them to support pupils with their work and to manage their behaviour.

You have restructured your leadership team. Middle leaders now have responsibility for leading the primary, secondary and post-16 departments. However, middle leaders are still working under the direction of senior leaders. As a result, they are not accountable for the quality of work in their departments.

Since the last inspection, a higher proportion of pupils placed at the school have a more complex range of needs than in the past. You have responded positively to this by changing the content of what is taught to different age groups and the way learning is assessed. This has helped to ensure that teaching is well matched to the particular needs of each pupil. Teachers are expected to run their lessons following routines that have been identified by leaders as best practice at the school. This includes how staff encourage good behaviour from pupils. As a result, a more consistent approach to teaching has been established. This consistency reassures pupils and lowers levels of anxiety.

Leaders have developed effective systems to monitor pupils' progress. They use these to quickly identify poor progress. Appropriate actions are then put in place to support pupils to catch up. Leaders have introduced an effective assessment structure. They have made sure that this links with the accredited courses older pupils follow. Where possible, you have compared assessments with other schools. However, you are aware that assessments for the most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 are not yet accurate enough. As a result, you are not able to ensure that these pupils make expected or better progress.

The vast majority of parents are very positive about the work of the school. They find staff helpful and are happy about the information that they receive about their child's progress and any behaviour concerns.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that record-keeping is detailed and of high quality. Procedures for checking the suitability of new staff, and contractors who come onto the site, are very effective. All staff take part in safeguarding training every September, which keeps their knowledge up to date. New staff receive this training before they start work. Leaders have created a school where all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All concerns and follow-up action are carefully recorded. The family support adviser plays a key role in this. She gets to know all new pupils and their families as they start at the school, and is available to help families as required. Leaders hold regular meetings to check that the school is doing all it can to support vulnerable pupils. Governors monitor the effectiveness of this work, as well as all safeguarding records.

Throughout their time at the school, pupils learn about keeping themselves safe. Whole weeks are allocated each year where they all learn about anti-bullying work, sex and relationships, and how to stay safe on the internet. Parents are encouraged to join some of these sessions so that they can continue this work at home. Pupils said to inspectors that they feel safe at school, and that adults manage the behaviour of other pupils well. Keeping pupils safe is at the centre of the school's work.

Inspection findings

- This inspection focused on how the school has improved since the last inspection, in particular, how well teaching is matched to the individual needs of pupils and leaders' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. There was also a focus on pupils' behaviour.
- Younger pupils and lower-ability pupils benefit from a structured routine, which allows them to settle in to lessons quickly. During the day, staff keep detailed records of how well pupils complete the tasks set and the amount of adult help that was required. Using this information, the teacher is able to carefully monitor the progress each pupil is making, and plan the next learning task. As a result, all current groups of pupils are making expected or better progress.
- Pupils with poor language skills confidently use the good range of aids that are available in all classes. These include visual timetables and picture exchange communication cards. This enables pupils to communicate effectively with adults and peers.
- The curriculum is now planned out into different levels, suitable for all ages and abilities of pupils. Teachers plan activities using learning objectives from the level that each pupil is currently working at. Before a pupil can move up to the next level, the teacher has to collect several examples of work demonstrating the progress that has been made. Leaders use this information to check that assessments are being made in line with the school's policy.
- The curriculum for the older group ensures that pupils are developing skills that will help them be successful in work when they get older. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in relevant work experience placements, and are offered access to a wide range of accredited courses. By the time pupils leave school, many gain a number of qualifications. For the most able, this includes GCSEs. All pupils who left the school in summer 2017 successfully moved onto training, college or work placements.
- School records show that although most teaching is of a good standard, there is some variation. Although leaders identify weaker teaching, their actions do not always result in rapid improvements.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons, in assembly and during breaktimes. Behaviour in lessons has improved since the introduction of a traffic light display in every classroom, which indicates how well each pupil is behaving. Pupils respond well to this, and enjoy having their positive behaviour recognised and responded to. Staff are very skilled at supporting pupils who become unsettled during lessons. Effective techniques are used, such as swapping adults to provide the pupil with a different person to help distract them or resolve a problem. As a result, pupils are quickly re-engaged in their learning.
- Some pupils have very challenging behaviour that requires staff to physically manage them to stop them hurting themselves, hurting others, causing significant damage or disrupting the learning of others. Recent training has been effective in helping staff develop strategies to help pupils reduce this type of behaviour. Handling plans support staff to respond consistently. Senior leaders now interview staff following such an incident in order to identify how this might

be avoided in the future. Pupils' views are also sought. However, more needs to be done to further reduce the risks to both staff and pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders are accountable for assessing the effectiveness of work that is carried out in their departments
- end of key stage 2 assessment judgements for most-able pupils accurately compare to judgements made in other schools
- pupils who have very challenging behaviour are effectively supported to safely manage their own behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Andy Lole
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with senior leaders, four members of the governing body and some teachers. An inspector had a phone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Lesson observations were carried out in most classes. These were done jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors met with the school council and a group of parents. Inspectors took into account 11 responses to 'Parent View', and five 'free-text' comments. There were no staff or pupil questionnaires completed. Inspectors scrutinised a range of information provided by the school including pupils' progress records, behaviour logs, school policies, self-evaluation reports, minutes from governors' meetings, and records of teaching and learning. The single central record and other safeguarding records were examined.