

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 November 2017

Mrs Sara Attra
Addington School
Woodlands Avenue
Woodley
Reading
Berkshire
RG5 3EU

Dear Mrs Attra

Short inspection of Addington School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with Hilary Goddard, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since you were appointed, in January 2017, you have built on the outstanding strengths of the school and ensured that it has remained a centre of excellence.

You have successfully restructured your leadership team and developed the role of middle leaders. You replaced outdated roles with subject leaders who could contribute helpfully to your curriculum review. This has meant that all leaders have better defined roles, and there is less overlap and more cohesion across the school. While leaders are held to account for their areas of responsibility, they feel that they have been given greater clarity of purpose and have the opportunity to be innovative.

As a result of your changes, the curriculum now meets pupils' needs even better than before. For example, all pupils now have personal learning plans. You have reorganised the early years department of the school to include pupils aged six and seven. This has enabled staff to continue to follow the early years curriculum for these pupils, and allows staff to incorporate pupils' interests as they plan for their learning. New pupils joining the early years have a carefully planned transition which includes a series of home visits, social stories, and 'stay and play' time. This helps them make a great start to school life.

You are determined that as many pupils as possible will be able to achieve paid employment when they leave Addington School. You are adamant that qualifications will open doors to this. You recognise that in order to achieve this pupils would need more time in the further education department. As a result, it now caters for pupils aged 14 to 19.

Pupils in the further education department are involved in a number of projects that will enhance their employability skills. For example, they bake cakes and biscuits in school to sell at a café for local government workers. This means that pupils have learned about the necessary health and safety rules, how to communicate with customers, handle money and give change. Links with companies, such as National Grid, have led to some pupils taking part in supported internships.

Staff describe you as 'brave and bold' in introducing your initiatives in order to meet pupils' needs. Middle leaders feel they have been given the licence to personalise and create a much more pupil-centred approach. This has resulted in improvements to pupils' behaviour, especially in the innovation of a specialist class. The restructuring of the departments within school, coupled with the inclusion of therapies into personalised learning plans, has brought about significant improvements.

You are passionate about the wide variety of activities that the school provides for pupils. The music department is renowned among local schools for the quality of music teaching and performance. Local mainstream schools work with your staff and pupils to prepare for a performance at a large local venue. The physical education department has a lot of links with mainstream schools and pupils experience a number of taster sessions in new sports and activities.

Pupils report that they feel safe and happy at school. They enjoy their lessons and activities and talked about the special events at school such as proms week and coffee mornings. All of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are happy and well looked after at school. Some spoke of feeling included in the 'Addington family'.

Leaders recognise that for some parents it is a huge decision to send their children to a school such as Addington. The role of the parent support adviser is crucial for providing support for them. In the last year she has worked with almost 50 families. Through events such as regular coffee mornings, parents are able to meet with each other, which gives them further avenues of support.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers had an accurate knowledge of the most able pupils' next steps of learning. Since then, you have changed the way that pupils are assessed to focus far more on individual progress.

You are determined to drive the improvement of the school even further in order to ensure that all pupils have the best possible chances in life. You have scrutinised pupils' attendance information with your school improvement adviser. You are keen to ensure that pupils' attendance improves further. In particular, you intend to monitor more precisely the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. You also plan to evaluate which of the many strategies funded by the pupil premium are most effective at helping disadvantaged pupils to catch up.

Safeguarding is effective.

The exceptionally strong culture of safeguarding permeates throughout the school. Inspectors noted high levels of staff supervision when pupils arrive at the start of the school day. Strong collaboration between school staff and transport staff was evident. This results in high levels of care for pupils on transitioning from transport to school. There are extremely high levels of security around the site, and the entry system for visitors is robust.

The induction process for new staff is very thorough. The staff code of conduct is an important part of this, as is the initial safeguarding training. Staff raise concerns promptly and these are followed up quickly by leaders who are tenacious in their work. For example, they successfully secured improved outcomes for any pupils who are known to other agencies.

Safeguarding is a regular agenda item for all meetings. There is annual safeguarding training for all staff and regular updates during weekly briefing meetings. Governors play a key role in monitoring the safeguarding practices across the school.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. This was demonstrated in their responses to the inspection pupil survey and when inspectors spoke with them. Parents agree that their children are happy at school and they feel that they are well looked after. The curriculum reflects the strong safeguarding ethos of the school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- During this short inspection we agreed to focus on the following areas:
 - whether safeguarding is effective
 - whether leaders and governors have successfully maintained outstanding teaching and outcomes in all key stages
 - the effectiveness of new assessment systems and how effectively teachers identify pupils who are falling behind
 - the impact of careers education.

- In order to ensure that all pupils have the best possible lives, leaders are determined in their pursuit of improved attendance for all. They have involved external agencies in this as well as the parent support adviser. It is evident that leaders are tracking individual pupils' absence carefully but now need to track the attendance of specific pupil groups, in particular disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders monitor teaching and learning with increased rigour. Checks on teaching are carried out by pairs of leaders to ensure that judgements are reached with clarity. Sometimes governors accompany leaders on visits in order to improve their understanding of what outstanding teaching and learning looks like.
- Governors work tirelessly to support the school. They are fully involved in the life of the school and regularly attend events and performances. They engage in regular training. For example, governors learned about the school's new data-assessment system. However, governors need to challenge leaders on the impact of the strategies used to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, in order to ensure that the school is providing value for money.
- The school's leaders work closely with leaders from nearby schools to check that assessment information is accurate.
- The assessment and curriculum reviews have led to greater individual support of pupils' learning. Every pupil has a personal learning plan which helps ensure that they make substantial progress over time. Their learning is carefully observed and recorded by classroom staff across a wide range of activities.
- The school offers an extensive variety of learning opportunities. Lessons and activities are designed around the learning needs of the individual pupils. Therapies are integrated into individual learning plans to ensure the best outcomes for each pupil.
- A group of pupils was observed making cakes and desserts to sell in the enterprise café later in the week. The pupils were fully engaged and productive. The atmosphere in the classroom was both purposeful and respectful because pupils understood what needed to be achieved. Similarly, during a horticulture lesson, Addington pupils were seen to be integrating with pupils from a local mainstream school to work towards an accreditation in horticulture.
- Careers education is well established in the school, and there is an extensive focus on preparation for employment. 'Work ready' lessons are delivered as part of the curriculum. You have forged excellent links with local businesses and further education colleges in order to support pupils into employment or further education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is monitored more precisely
- the impact of the different strategies used to help disadvantaged pupils catch up with other pupils nationally are evaluated.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Edwards
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with you, other leaders, four governors, and a group comprising newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers. They also held a telephone conversation with your school improvement adviser from the local authority.

Inspectors made short visits to 16 classrooms with senior leaders and looked at pupils' files and books. They talked to pupils informally and formally and spoke with parents when they arrived at the school at the beginning of the day. Inspectors considered 33 responses to Parent View and 13 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors also considered 65 responses to the staff survey.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding records, the self-evaluation plan, the school development plan, assessment information about pupils' progress, and information about behaviour, attendance and safety. Inspectors also looked at minutes of the meetings of the governing body. Inspectors looked at information published on the school's website.