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Mrs Carolyn Claridge
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Dear Mrs Carolyn Claridge

Short inspection of Tiverton School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2017 with Sarah Ashley, 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 Tiverton School was judged to be good in September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is currently waiting to relocate to new purpose-built premises, which will support a re-designation to incorporate a broader spectrum of special educational needs. Leaders and governors are implementing plans to increase staffing with the necessary skills required to cope with the changing needs of the pupils.

You are supported well by your deputy headteacher but recognise the need to expand the current senior leadership team to cope with the increase in pupil population and diversity of needs.

Your staff show a high level of commitment to the pupils and are motivated by the senior leadership team. They show willingness to adapt to new initiatives and feel valued because you have involved them in the decision-making process of the new premises. The positive relationships that staff demonstrate with the children encourage pupils to have the confidence to try new things. Staff have a good level of knowledge of the pupils' different special educational needs. They use this to ensure that they set appropriate tasks for all pupils. However, curriculum planning for pupils in key stage 1 does not always take account of pupils' ages and abilities.

The members of the governing body are supportive of you and understand the importance of planning for the future. The governing body has a range of skills that complement those of the senior leadership team and governors are committed to providing a balance of challenge and support. They agree that the new assessment process should now incorporate information on pupils' personal and social development.

The strengths that were identified in the previous inspection report remain as key strengths, in particular the relationship that school has with parents. Parents remain confident in the school and secure in the knowledge that their children are safe and happy. Leaders and staff have created a positive ethos and an 'interactive and person-centred, welcoming school'.

The behaviour of pupils around school is good, and older pupils welcome the opportunity to develop their independence by carrying out small, appropriate tasks. They relish their roles as school council representatives and enjoyed the democratic voting system that leaders introduced. Pupils' opinions are valued and they expressed delight in being able to choose colour schemes for the new premises.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place. High-quality records ensure that all forms of guidance are adhered to.

Leaders and governors ensure that all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding requirements and legislation. Staff understand their duty to keep children safe and are quick to respond to any changes in pupils' behaviour. They show vigilance and tenacity when raising concerns with appropriate bodies and recognise the need to escalate to the next level when concerns are not resolved.

Governors are keen to support leaders with ensuring that pupils remain safe by systematically meeting to discuss any potential and real concerns.

Pupils reported that they feel safe in school and that they are happy. The parents that the inspectors spoke to agreed that 'children are safe and well looked after by school'.

School assemblies provide opportunities to explain to pupils how to stay safe, and they are supported by visits from the local police and fire services.

Inspection findings

- You, the governing body and staff know the pupils and school very well. You have taken decisive yet supportive action to tackle any weaknesses in teaching. You have carefully structured your staffing to ensure that staff skills are utilised effectively. By employing additional staff prior to the relocation, you have ensured that outcomes for pupils' remains at the forefront of your actions.

- The recent creation of the role of outreach teacher ensures that the new pupils who are due to join you in January 2018 are well supported in their mainstream settings, and provides staff with the opportunity to learn about the level of their knowledge and skills and their diverse abilities.
- Staff use a range of cues to prepare pupils for their next stage in learning. Next steps are clearly identified and displayed in all classrooms, and this enables all teaching and support staff to assist pupils in reaching their next goals. In addition to the next steps, staff provide physical cues to signify starts and ends of lessons, including a song to encourage children to tidy up their activity. Teachers were observed providing positive feedback to pupils, such as, 'You did very well with counting but now you need to find the next number.'
- There is a consistent application of communication methods across the school. Staff are well versed in the use of sign language and symbols to support the verbal instructions given to pupils. Verbal language is kept simple and concise while remaining reassuring and gentle.
- Visual timetables support pupils' levels, and progression in the use of these is evident throughout. Pupils in early years and key stage 1 use a timetable based on the now and next activity, and as they progress further up the school they begin to use and engage with a visual timetable for a whole day's learning. Additional resources are provided for pupils with visual impairment.
- Pupils in the early years are currently a very small cohort and, therefore, you have found it necessary to group them with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress overall. However, they are following the early years curriculum, which is often appropriate for them, but they are not given enough opportunities to explore age-related activities.
- Support staff are generally well deployed and provide extra support to enable secure group activities. Teaching assistants support teachers in their endeavour to deliver meaningful and purposeful lessons.
- Leaders have introduced moderation with a range of local and regional special educational needs schools. This has enabled them to compare and benchmark Tiverton School against schools with similar cohorts. Middle leaders share the enthusiasm of the new assessment process and support senior leaders' ambitions to develop this assessment tool further to include reporting on behaviour and personal and social development.
- Further work has been completed to incorporate targets from pupils' individual education plans and education, health and care plans into the school's assessment process. This enables leaders and staff to provide detailed analysis of progress to parents and other stakeholders.
- Middle leaders have implemented new programmes to improve reading skills. By working closely with the educational psychologist, staff have developed their knowledge and understanding of the reasons for reading. This has resulted in themed days to increase pupils' enjoyment of reading, such as 'Do Something Booky'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new assessment system is embedded to reflect the needs of the pupils by incorporating the assessment of personal and social development and behaviour
- a more appropriate curriculum for pupils in key stage 1 is provided, based on their age
- a review of the current curriculum takes place to meet the needs of the diverse and changing population.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Ellis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and family liaison manager. I held discussions with five governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. We also met with middle leaders and discussed curriculum responsibilities and the outreach that you provide to pupils currently on the waiting list for Tiverton School. The inspection team met with members of the school council and spoke with parents. We visited every classroom as part of a learning walk and completed lesson observations in all five classrooms.

I took account of 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 18 responses to the online staff questionnaire. I looked at your own analysis of parent questionnaires.

I considered a range of school information, including your self-evaluation and current school improvement plan. We discussed your assessments of pupils' progress across the school, and you shared with me evidence of the new assessment process. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies, the single central register, staff files and a sample of safeguarding files. I looked at attendance and behaviour logs.