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Mrs Jo Ashworth
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ashworth

Short inspection of North West Secondary Short Stay School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 good in December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead with a clear vision and total determination. You are relentless in the drive to provide a successful 'pathway' for each pupil. Your wider leadership team is highly effective. You have empowered team members to lead in their particular fields of expertise and responsibility. This includes the leadership of the curriculum, which is constantly evolving to meet the needs of individual pupils, many of whom only spend a short period of time at the school.

Our visits to classrooms on both sites of the school clearly demonstrated the many strengths in the quality of education available. Teaching and support staff work hard to plan learning that is relevant to pupils. One pupil happily explained how he had developed his mathematical and English skills when working with his peers to plan a successful visit to the Emirates football stadium. This will be followed up by the group running football-coaching sessions in a local primary school. A science lesson showed pupils working together as a team to gather evidence and record accurate results during a practical activity. They responded well to advice and guidance from the teacher. Support staff kept pupils focused on the task in hand, which led to positive outcomes as the lesson progressed.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors highlighted the many strengths of the school. This included pupils making good progress in English and mathematics, changing their attendance habits, improving their attitudes to school and modifying their behaviour. Inspectors also identified the need for staff to plan more learning

that matched the individual needs of pupils, as well as the need for the management committee to hold leaders to account for more rigorously for improving the school. These matters have been addressed successfully. Classroom visits showed that staff know and understand the needs of pupils well. Tasks are pitched at the right level. Pupils are making good progress academically and with their pastoral development. The management committee understands its responsibility to hold leaders to account. It does so effectively, offering a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and wider leadership team.

Since the last inspection, leaders have continued the important process of self-evaluation. You were able to tell me about the school's many strengths, as well as the key priorities that need to be improved. These include increasing the opportunities that pupils have to develop their reading skills across the wider curriculum. You agreed with me that while self-evaluation is accurate, development planning needs to be much more focused. This will allow the management committee and staff at all levels to understand more clearly the key priorities to improve the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The culture to safeguard pupils is strong. Staff are reflective. They communicate well and are constantly trying to assess and reduce risk when they identify potential problems. Staff know that many pupils have complicated lives outside of school. Because of this, staff understand the importance of providing a safe and caring environment at school.

Policies and procedures are sound. Safeguarding training is up to date. Staff know what to do if they have concerns. Their work with external agencies is necessarily strong.

Parents who responded to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors were positive about the care that staff afford to their children. This was also the case with the pupils themselves.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum is fit for purpose. Staff know pupils well. They plan learning that meets pupils' individual needs appropriately. This includes their social and emotional needs, as well as their academic success. Opportunities for pupils to learn off-site are a particular strength. Staff have a clear view of the purpose of the curriculum. They understand the importance of planning learning that is relevant, engaging and, as far as possible, based on real-life experiences. Pupils are supported well for the next stages of their education, training and employment. School leaders are developing reading across the wider curriculum in order to foster better reading habits and improve pupils' reading skills.
- Most pupils are making good or better progress from their different starting points. School leaders and teachers track the progress of individual pupils well. Staff are sensitive and responsive and ensure that pupils' individual needs are

constantly met. Pupils themselves are very positive about the progress they are making at school. They appreciate the positivity of staff, which helps them to become successful learners again. This is especially the case for the large proportion of pupils who have not had positive experiences at school in the recent past.

- Staff understand the importance of ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. Attendance records are well maintained and accurate. This includes the monitoring of pupils' attendance at off-site provision, which is checked meticulously on a day-to-day basis. School leaders intervene positively when pupils' attendance isn't as strong as it could be. Communication with parents and other agencies is strong. This includes the sharing of information with pupils' mainstream schools to ensure that absence is kept to a minimum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school development planning is sharpened and becomes more closely aligned with the school's self-evaluation document, so that leaders and those in positions of governance have a clearer understanding of the key priorities for improving the school
- pupils are provided with more opportunities to develop their reading skills across the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors visited classrooms on both sites of the school, observing teaching and learning, and assessing the quality of pupils' work. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and as they moved around the school. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and the chair of the management committee. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. One parent and one pupil held separate formal meetings with inspectors. Inspectors also talked informally to pupils throughout the inspection. They took into account one reply to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire and one free-text message. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including pupils' progress information, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, policies, minutes of meetings held by the management committee, and records of visits by the local authority.