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Mrs L Davis
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Davis

Short inspection of St Anne's School and Sixth Form College

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 2017 with David Penny, 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 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your ambition to do the very best for the pupils in St Anne's shines through all of the school's work and is shared by other leaders, staff and governors alike. Collectively, you have tackled the few areas that required improvement at the last inspection successfully and built on the many strengths.

The previous inspection identified that the most able pupils needed to be challenged further through the use of more nationally recognised accreditations. This issue has been tackled with gusto and virtually all pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form now achieve accreditations that meet their needs, abilities and interests. The focus on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills has not waned and pupils develop these skills from their entry into school. Their often small steps are carefully recorded and tracked. This means that staff have a very clear understanding of pupils' current abilities. As a result, teachers plan activities that ensure that pupils make rapid progress from their very diverse starting points, while taking into account their complex needs.

Your continued focus on the training of staff, monitoring and evaluation of learning and the rigorous management of staff performance has ensured that staff are very well trained and supported. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils exceptionally well. They are adept in managing pupils' individual complex needs and behaviours, ensuring a calm, respectful working atmosphere in class and around the school. Teachers usually deploy teaching assistants expertly in lessons. It was

heartening to see them working closely with pupils on their individual learning and communication targets and observing pupils responding willingly to the challenge and support provided. Leaders are working on the small number of less effective aspects of support.

I wanted to understand whether pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour remained outstanding. I found this to be the case. These aspects, along with the development of pupils' resilience and social and emotional skills, continue to be major strengths of the school. The very strong relationships between staff and pupils provide the bedrock on which pupils learn to trust, gain confidence and then succeed in their communication, learning and development. From early years to the sixth form, pupils are nurtured, supported and challenged to make the most of their time in St Anne's and to be as well prepared as possible for their next steps. Highly effective morning and evening handover meetings between residential staff and school staff ensure that pupils' successes, needs and challenges are well understood. This aids a smooth transition into class or after-school activities.

I was concerned that attendance rates were below average in 2016 and wanted to see what attendance is like currently. I found that you and your team have taken strong actions to improve attendance rates across the school. Rates are now well above those found in similar schools and just below those found in secondary schools nationally. This is noteworthy, given the numbers of pupils who attend who have significant medical needs or life-limiting conditions.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety is of the highest priority. Designated safeguarding leaders support staff well to ensure that pupils are safe in school and are able to understand and manage risks to their safety at home and in the wider world. A raft of good-quality information is available to parents on the school's website to help them understand risks to their children's safety and to access informative national helplines. Pupils feel very safe and speak highly of the care provided to them to keep them safe.

Staff are vigilant in identifying concerns and reporting them appropriately. They are trained in line with national requirements and updated about safeguarding issues locally and nationally. One-to-one discussions between safeguarding leaders and staff are set up after training to check that staff have understood the important messages. You have developed strong partnership working with a range of different agencies and services to ensure timely care and support for pupils and families in times of need and to keep pupils safe from harm. Parents who spoke to inspectors are clear that their children are very safe in school.

The governing body's safeguarding committee meets regularly to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. Governors are strong ambassadors for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Governors recently invited a safeguarding expert from the Department for Education to the school. This was to request that the needs of such pupils are recognised more clearly in future safeguarding guidance provided to schools and services. This is

because governors are concerned about the lack of helpful information in current documentation and know that more needs to be done nationally to safeguard pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection findings

- Highly effective teaching and usually strong deployment of staff ensure that pupils thrive and make substantial progress in their learning, communication and personal development from their starting points into school. High staff–pupil ratios mean that pupils’ learning needs are identified quickly and then usually very well met. As a result, there is little difference in the progress that boys and girls or disadvantaged and other pupils make, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional lessons for the most able pupils in these subjects are ensuring that these pupils are making rapid and sustained progress also. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection and one of the focuses of this inspection.
- There are, however, a small number of occasions where teachers do not deploy teaching assistants in all activities. Occasionally, in circle time, they sit passively while the teacher talks to a pupil. As a result, valuable communication time is lost with their individual pupils. There are also a few occasions where staff intervene too quickly to help pupils with their tasks, giving them the answer or providing prompts without waiting to see whether pupils can work things out for themselves. Leaders have been working on these aspects with a few staff and are continuing to ensure that such incidents are eliminated from classroom practice.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully and it is embedded across the curriculum and activities that are planned throughout the year. Through such work, pupils also gain a good understanding of world cultures and religions and the values that are key to taking a successful part in British society.
- A wide range of work takes place to enable pupils to understand and respect differences in others. This includes work in the local community and the ability for many to gain experience of working with mainstream pupils in their schools. Your commitment to equality of opportunity for all is evident across the school’s work. Pupils feel valued as individuals and this builds their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are polite and caring towards one another. Acts of kindness such as holding the door for each other, or an older pupil taking the hand of a younger pupil to direct them back to their lessons after break, are commonplace.
- I wanted to check on the quality of the curriculum. I found that it has been remodelled to make sure that it remains relevant to the increasingly diverse needs of pupils. The curriculum includes a strong focus on developing pupils’ communication, English and mathematical skills. Exciting activities in school and visits and activities out of school enrich the curriculum, capture pupils’ individual interests, broaden their horizons and deepen their skills. Changes to the curriculum have been particularly beneficial for the pupils who have significant communication needs. Horticulture, swimming and horse-riding are just a few of the activities that have been provided to individual pupils so that they can excel

during school time. Work experiences for pupils in key stage 4 enhance the curriculum even further and build pupils' skills and understanding of the world of work successfully.

- The sixth form continues to thrive and the diverse needs of students are very well met. This is because of the high-quality teaching, care and support and because the curriculum is personalised to each student's interests and long-term goals. Life skills work and work experience sit alongside basic skills work and a range of accredited courses that students can take. Enterprise activities, such as the weekly café, farm shop and a furniture recycling business, develop further students' skills for work. They also develop their communication, interaction and speaking skills through the links with the members of the local community who access these activities.
- You and your senior and middle leaders review the school's work regularly and have a very accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs further attention. Clear improvement plans stem from these reviews and are checked regularly for impact by governors. Yours is a reflective team and you do not rest on your laurels. You welcome challenge from the local authority school improvement adviser. You constantly review and refine practice so that pupils continue to thrive in this inclusive and happy environment.
- Governance is effective and continues to go from strength to strength. New members with a range of expertise and skills complement the established skills of the team. Your headteacher's reports to governors are informative and comprehensive. For example, governors receive regular assessment information on the progress of pupils across all key stages and of groups of pupils across the school. Minutes of meetings show the challenging questions that governors ask of you and your team, to ensure that pupils are safe and are achieving as well as they should.
- Governors are aware that they need to have more evaluative information on behaviour incidents and types of incidents. This is because individual data for pupils has not been aggregated to show trends and types of incidents over time. This limits their ability to challenge you on the full impact of the school's work on reducing incidents over time, or in recognising, as the data shows, that incidents of serious behaviour are rare. You have taken action to tackle this and such information will be included in the forthcoming headteacher's reports.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff working with pupils are productively deployed in all activities
- staff give pupils time to respond to their tasks consistently, to see whether they can work things out for themselves before intervening and supporting.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and your senior team, middle leaders and representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. A telephone conversation was held with the local authority's school improvement adviser. Inspectors visited learning across the school, accompanied by two senior leaders. We talked informally to pupils in lessons and at breaktime and formally to a group of pupils at lunchtime. Inspectors analysed a range of documentation, including leaders' written evaluation of the school's work, improvement plans and information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. We checked a range of policies and procedures, including those to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also considered the four written responses to Parent View, Ofsted's inspection questionnaire. There were too few responses to the survey to show an analysis of results.

This inspection was aligned with the first day of the social care inspector's inspection of the residential provision in the school. That inspection lasts for three days and the inspection report is available on Ofsted's website. The social care inspector and lead inspector shared information and the social care inspector contributed to the final team meeting of this inspection.