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20 December 2017

Mrs Judith Humphry  
Headteacher  
Welcombe Hills School  
Blue Cap Road  
Stratford-upon-Avon  
Warwickshire  
CV37 6TQ

Dear Mrs Humphry

### **Short inspection of Welcombe Hills School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2017 with Johanne Clifton, 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 June 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 have assessed the progress made towards the areas for improvement found at the last inspection. Your evaluation of the school's current performance is accurate. You identified what actions you need to take to secure further and continuous improvement. You recognise that there are still areas you need to develop to ensure that the best practice you would like to see is consistent across the school.

There has been an increase in the number of pupils at the school. There are now 180 pupils, including 25 taught at your 16–19 Hub on a site on Drayton Avenue. There is also an assessment nursery on site which takes up to 10 children in the morning, and 10 in the afternoon. The school is due to become an academy on 1 February 2018.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. This creates a positive and supportive learning environment in which pupils are always ready to try their best. Pupils told inspectors that they like school and enjoy their lessons. They appreciate the opportunities they have to take part in clubs, to perform with external agencies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, and to go on trips and residential visits. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and are well looked after by staff. They spoke confidently about knowing how to keep themselves safe online. They said that some pupils have difficulty with their behaviour, but were confident

that staff always sort out issues.

You have addressed the development areas from the previous inspection report. Training has helped teachers and teaching assistants work together to plan effective learning tasks for your pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. They are using new technologies such as eye-gaze and voice-activated software to support learning and improve these pupils' experiences and opportunities. Classrooms are characterised by very positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers. The creative arts are a real strength in the school and can be seen in the wonderful work on display throughout the school. The 16–19 Hub has been developed to provide your older students with a curriculum which is varied and interesting. It provides them with a range of real-world challenges such as the Wednesday cafe for the local community. You have a very realistic recognition of the strengths in teaching in your school, in all key stages, and that there are still some lessons which need to be more interesting and exciting to stimulate pupils' learning.

Governors have a great deal of confidence in the leadership team within the school. They believe leaders have the capacity to manage the proposed changes to the school becoming an academy. Governors hold regular meetings and know the school's current strengths and areas for development. They hold school leaders to account and give appropriate challenge and support.

Parents spoke very positively about the school to inspectors. The responses made on Parent View reflect this level of satisfaction. They are delighted with the quality of education provided for their children and the level of care from the staff. They appreciate how well you keep them informed of their child's progress and how you deal with any concerns. Comments included: 'My child would like to go to school seven days a week!', and 'Welcombe Hills is a truly special school – celebrating each child and what they do well'.

### **Safeguarding is effective**

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are very clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Keeping children safe is integral to all the school's work. Pupils' medical needs are well supported and checks on medication are in place. There are appropriate procedures to ensure that staff register all concerns. Senior leaders follow these up immediately. There are clear protocols for dealing with absences and those missing from school. When there have been safeguarding incidents, school leaders have followed the school's own, and the local authority's, procedures to the letter.

Safeguarding training is regularly provided for all staff, who know what to do and whom to contact when they have any concerns. You have ensured that you follow through all concerns referred to social services or the local authority. These result in actions that support pupils and their parents.

Staff throughout the school, including the 16–19 Hub, teach pupils about the potential risks and dangers they might face. As a result, you keep pupils safe in

school, and when online or on school visits.

### **Inspection findings**

- You regularly collect information about how well pupils are doing in school, especially in English, mathematics and science. You recognised a weakness in science results in key stage 4 last year, and have addressed this area. Pupils have targets for personal behaviours on their individual education plans. These are informed by each pupil's education, health and care plan. Class teachers collect evidence of pupils' achievements towards these targets. However, there is no common system for recording this information. This means teachers and leaders cannot clearly see what pupils have already achieved and what their next steps of learning will be.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2 are at least good. All pupils are making good progress from their low starting points. Children in the early years make strong progress against the early learning goals. Pupils complete a range of externally accredited courses at key stage 4, including all pupils gaining entry-level qualifications in English and mathematics. Some pupils in 2017 also gained success in performing arts, child development, physical education and in GCSE art. The variety of subjects pupils are offered is still too limited. Extending the curriculum at key stage 4 would result in being able to offer pupils a wider range of opportunities and pathways in key stage 5.
- You have used extra government funding from the pupil premium and the sports premium on a range of strategies. You have planned these to support the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils. You have used the pupil premium to make sure disadvantaged pupils have the extra support they need. This includes support from learning mentors, targeted intervention groups, improved staffing ratios for some groups, professional services, and residential experiences. Leaders carry out a reasonable analysis of this additional funding.
- You have procedures in place to chase up pupils who are not in school each day and find out why they are not in school. The number of children who are absent from school remains high, especially for your more vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. There is a need for further work to identify why pupils are not coming to school and what more steps you can take to raise attendance levels.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop creative strategies to reduce pupils' absence, and especially that of disadvantaged pupils, so that those pupils who are absent too often can benefit fully from the education they receive at school
- they establish a robust assessment system which ensures that they and teachers have a clear understanding of each pupil's progress in all areas of the curriculum

- they extend the range of opportunities and accreditation offered to pupils at key stage 4.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Roalfe  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

To explore the main areas of enquiry for this inspection, inspectors:

- met with you, senior leaders, the school staff, governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority
- met with parents at the beginning of the school day to discuss their child's welfare and progress
- spoke with pupils and met with a group of pupils to discuss their learning and school experiences
- met with staff formally and informally to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection
- scrutinised a range of documents including work in pupils' books, teachers' planning files, curriculum folders, the single central record, safeguarding documents, behaviour, physical intervention and attendance records and the school's system for measuring pupils' progress
- visited lessons in early years, key stages 1 and 2, and key stage 4, some with senior leader
- visited the 16–19 Hub where 25 pupils are taught
- considered the views of the 16 parents who contacted Ofsted through the online questionnaire Parent View; there were no responses from staff to the online staff questionnaire, and no responses from pupils to the online pupil questionnaire.