

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



30 January 2018

Mr James Stanbrook
Headteacher
Sheringham Woodfields School
Holt Road
Sheringham
Norfolk
NR26 8ND

Dear Mr Stanbrook

Short inspection of Sheringham Woodfields School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018 with Melanie Hall, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your leaders are devoted to the pupils, their families and the staff. You have maintained the strengths of the school. A key strength of your leadership is your constant drive to improve. Leaders have made judicious changes to the school, including the curriculum, assessment and the outside play area. The fundamental rationale for these changes has been about reshaping the school to meet pupils' needs even better.

Many pupils have complex needs. These are met exceptionally well. Pupils are happy and well cared for. They play well together on the playground and make the most of the exceptional way you have planned the outside environment, which stimulates communication, teamwork and learning through play. 'School is fun and 100% safe' was the view expressed by one pupil, who summed up the comments made by many.

The school is held in very high esteem in the community. Parents say how delighted they are that their children attend this school. They are, rightly, overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. They use words such as 'brilliant', 'wonderful'

and 'life-changing' to describe their children's experiences. One parent said, 'I love visiting the school. Any excuse and I'm in there. They all know all the pupils. It has a real family feeling.'

Governors have complete confidence in your work, while providing you with the necessary challenge to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength. They fulfil their statutory duties and provide strong support. They recognise the positive changes that have been introduced and the impact they have made.

Staff development is a strength of the school and is complemented by the high priority given to staff well-being. The majority of staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school.

At your previous inspection, the inspector noted areas for future development. These related to the need for pupils' thinking always to be extended, for the small gains in pupils' learning to be recorded and for the impact of teaching on pupils' learning to be rigorously checked. The improvements you have brought about in these areas have made a real difference to pupils' learning and demonstrate how committed leaders are to improving pupils' lives. Looking at the way you have acted on the issues for improvement from the previous inspection was a key focus during the inspection and my detailed findings are given below.

You have rightfully recognised the need to increase the range of technology available for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties so that they have a greater voice. You also understand the need to further enhance the assessment of pupils' emotional needs and extend the range of therapeutic approaches in order to support pupils' learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding is your highest priority. You have established a safe culture which permeates the school. Leaders act promptly on the information they receive, working closely with professional agencies and parents and carers to protect pupils. Records are comprehensive and are of a high quality. Highly efficient systems help ensure that information is effectively collated. You meet weekly with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss any concerns. Staff are passionate about keeping pupils safe and know their pupils exceptionally well. All staff receive appropriate training and are meticulous about their responsibilities around keeping children safe. Half-termly refresher courses keep staff alert to risks in your own school.

A variety of ways of communicating are used to keep pupils safe. Pupils report there is no bullying in the school and that any concerns they have are dealt with by staff. They are taught how to keep safe, including when using the internet and mobile phone. Every parent we spoke to and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text responses agreed that their children feel safe at school.

Inspection findings

- My first focus of the inspection was to review how effective the school is at communication. Parents that spoke with inspectors and those that had added written comments to Parent View were extremely positive about the varied strategies in place to support communication. They reported that leaders and staff are very approachable and deal with any concerns in a swift and timely manner.
- The home-school book facilitates frequent communication both ways. The school has a supportive website which is easy to navigate. It encourages parents to participate in their child's learning by explaining how they can extend the learning at home.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' abilities to communicate and engage with the wider environment. Adults draw skilfully on a diverse selection of resources to support pupils' learning and communication. Speech, signing, body language, facial expression, voice tone and the use of symbols encourage pupils to have a voice in their learning.
- Another focus was on the quality of the curriculum. Leaders ensure that the curriculum inspires and challenges pupils and that it is sharply focused on meeting their individual needs. Personal, social and health education, along with English and mathematics, are the subjects that teachers focus on the most. However, other subjects are not ignored because the school believes pupils need experience in the full range of subjects.
- The curriculum is a key ingredient of the school's success as it is constantly adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Developing pupils' independence is a key aim of all staff. Many parents reported on the positive impact of this work and the difference it makes to family life. Pupils make at least good progress and often outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The school is proud of its community links, seeing the wider community as an extension of the classroom. Pupils are actively involved in the day-to-day upkeep of the smallholding project 'The Patch', where they learn about horticulture. Woodfields Den, the school's own charity shop in the heart of Sheringham, provides a whole new range of learning experiences for pupils.
- Next, we agreed to focus on why disadvantaged pupils are making such good progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a key priority for leaders and governors. Leaders clearly understand and articulate the additional barriers that these pupils face, and target spending to overcome these challenges.
- Leaders monitor the progress that disadvantaged pupils make very closely. Any pupil at risk of falling behind is identified early. Leaders work with teachers to ensure that a planned programme of support is implemented, and this is kept under regular review. Progress is constantly monitored. Teachers deploy their additional adults effectively in lessons.
- Governors take a keen interest in evaluating the impact of additional funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that funding is spent justifiably. School assessment shows consistently good progress for these pupils over time.

- My final focus was on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Ensuring that pupils' thinking is always extended is now a very strong aspect of your work. Staff training was conducted to raise expectations of target-setting. You also enhanced your assessment system to target, track and record across multiple levels, enabling pupils to be challenged more.
- The second area for improvement concerned making sure that the small gains made by pupils are always recorded. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress ensures that small gains in learning are documented. Regular progress meetings are held by senior leaders with the class teacher to discuss any barriers to a pupil's learning and strategies to overcome this are put into immediate effect.
- The third area for improvement related to leaders checking on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time. You have grasped this opportunity by ensuring that pupils consistently receive helpful guidance on an ongoing basis. This enables them to improve their learning. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, ensuring that all groups are given every opportunity to succeed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the range of technology available for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties is increased so that they have an even greater voice
- they continue to develop the assessment of pupils' emotional needs and link them to appropriate strategies
- they further extend the range of therapeutic approaches and the monitoring of its effectiveness.

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

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. She met with the chair and four other members of the governing body. Accompanied by leaders, inspectors visited 11 lessons across all key stages. We spoke to pupils formally and informally, and spoke with parents when they arrived at the school at the beginning of the day. Inspectors analysed 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 10 free-text responses.

Inspectors also considered 46 responses to the staff survey. No pupil questionnaire responses were received. Inspectors also viewed the school's own survey information completed by parents, staff and pupils. Various school documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding records, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, assessment information about pupils' progress, and information about attendance, safety and behaviour. Inspectors also looked at the minutes of the governing body, and information published on the school website.