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Dr Linda James  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs James

### **Short inspection of Chasetown Community School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 2018 with Susan Lowry, 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 noted at the last inspection. Your school continues to cater well for pupils who were unsuccessful in mainstream education because of their complex social, emotional or mental health needs. You and your staff have worked hard to provide a supportive and close-knit educational environment, which helps to ensure that all pupils thrive and achieve well.

The school has made good progress in tackling the key areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection. Your pupils are taught and supported by an expert and motivated staff. Staff have a good understanding of the different needs of each pupil, including those who have complex medical conditions. A wide range of carefully organised interventions, including tailored support, helps pupils to engage in learning, to experience success and to grow in confidence.

You are very well supported by an impressive governing body. Skilled and experienced governors provide you with detailed challenge and support; this helps to keep attention focused on the educational progress made by pupils. The governing body is currently considering plans for forming a multi-academy trust with a neighbouring mainstream primary school. It recognises that doing so has the potential to provide pupils with more access to specialist teaching and greater mainstream experience. In turn, governors expect that this will prepare pupils more thoroughly for when they leave the school.

Parents and carers spoke very positively about how the school helps them. They value the effort that individual members of staff are prepared to make to meet the welfare needs of each pupil. They are particularly effusive about the way that school staff, including the family support worker, make themselves available outside of school hours. This high level of support for parents and carers helps to encourage good attendance, resilience and a positive attitude among pupils.

The school has won awards for its work as an international school and as a dyslexia-friendly school. It has achieved the ICT Mark, the E Safety Mark and the 3rd Millennium Learning Award. It has gained national recognition for its work on keeping pupils safe.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is given high priority by the school. The leadership of safeguarding is highly effective. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks and records are detailed and of a high quality.

Pupils feel safe when they are at the school. They know whom to turn to if they have any difficulties. They are given regular and detailed advice about how to keep themselves safe, including when online or outside of school hours. Parents and carers are well supported by the school and are given useful information about how they can help protect their children.

Training for staff is detailed and comprehensive. It is updated regularly and enhanced by weekly training sessions. Staff are aware of issues that can affect pupils, and assessments of individual and local risks are thorough. Communication between staff is very good and ensures that relevant information is shared quickly and effectively. The school has established helpful relationships with outside and partner agencies. Where necessary, school leaders escalate concerns until they are confident that pupils receive the external support they require.

### **Inspection findings**

- Alongside safeguarding, we agreed to focus this visit on: the steps taken to improve teaching since the last inspection; the impact of efforts to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour; and the extent of the pupils' progress.
- New appointments to the teaching staff and a weekly programme of training have helped to strengthen teaching further. In particular, you have ensured that teaching and other staff have the expertise needed to meet pupils' needs, including those who have medical conditions such as autistic spectrum disorder.
- Most lessons are lively and stimulate the pupils' interest. In the best lessons, teachers draw on pupils' experiences to make the topic relevant, use questioning to keep them on track, and take opportunities to stretch and challenge pupils' thinking. In other instances, opportunities to extend the pupils' learning are not so readily taken. For example, more-able pupils are not always asked to build on what they have learned or to give reasons for their answers, particularly at key

stage 3.

- A few of the activities set during the 'start of the school day' sessions are mundane and use worksheets that lack challenge.
- Individual targets are set for each pupil at the start of each major piece of work. These are set out in detailed 'learning passports', which draw on age-related expectations as well as individual education, health and care plans. Class teachers, with their support staff, keep a close eye on pupils' progress against the 'learning passport' targets.
- Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good. Regular praise and a well-defined programme of rewards encourage positive attitudes and respectful relationships. Pupils are keen to achieve success and recognise the importance of making an effort inside and outside of lessons.
- Systems for managing the behaviour of pupils, including intervention, are well organised and understood by staff, pupils and parents. The school is calm and orderly. Supervision around the site is ample and effective. Teachers and other staff are skilled at preventing minor incidents from developing into serious disturbances.
- Considerable time is spent listening to and working with parents and carers. Pupils benefit from the shared understanding that exists between home and the school. Most pupils now attend school far more regularly than they did their previous school. No pupils have been excluded, either temporarily or permanently, since the school opened.
- Pupils at the school make good progress from their starting points. Although most pupils are working below the standards expected for their ages, particularly at key stage 3, this is usually because they have made very little progress before joining the school. Lively teaching, well-organised classroom-based interventions and extra-curricular activities usually provide pupils with multiple opportunities to engage in learning, and to make progress, even when their prior experiences of school have been very patchy.
- Senior leaders check frequently on the quality of work in books and folders. They assess the impact of teaching on learning and set improvement targets for staff. Governors monitor how well pupils are doing by regularly scrutinising detailed information about their academic and personal progress.
- Each year, senior leaders ask teachers to push the boundaries further during 'risk it' weeks, which help to extend the challenge provided for pupils. Despite this, senior leaders recognise that the most able pupils are not always challenged enough. In a few lessons, opportunities to extend the more able pupils are missed, and this means that their progress is sometimes slower than it could be.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more able pupils are given further opportunities in lessons to extend their learning, particularly at key stage 3

- written and other activities done during the 'start of the school day' sessions provide pupils with enough challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Cladingbowl  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors visited lessons throughout the day to observe teaching and learning. They spoke with senior leaders, a variety of staff, parents and carers, and pupils. They observed the pupils' behaviour inside and outside of classrooms. They scrutinised key written information, including documents about safeguarding, teaching and the pupils' progress. They also spoke with three members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the staff questionnaire and one response to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire.