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29 March 2018

Mr David Stewart
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Stewart

Short inspection of Oak Field School and Specialist Sports College

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018 with Aileen King, 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. You are dedicated to the pupils and ensure that they are at the heart of what the school does every day. Parents and carers are full of praise for the personalised care the school gives their children. The staff use their expert knowledge of each child's needs to support and challenge them, so all pupils can achieve their best. Therefore, pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and cared for well. The school is a welcoming and friendly place and pupils who are accompanied by parents say how they like to go to the café at the start of each day. This helps them feel relaxed and ready to learn.

A central part of the school's approach is to link the pupils' care and learning needs. You do this extremely well by enabling physiotherapists to lead sessions in classrooms. Here, pupils benefit from the exercise routines they are given as well as learning to follow instructions alongside their class peers. Pupils have a wide range of needs and abilities. For some, learning through sensory experiences is a key part of the curriculum, while other pupils are taught to speak French and can read well. All staff have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve. They continually use praise and encouragement, which keeps pupils highly motivated throughout lessons.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Inspectors saw no incidents where pupils were upset or anxious during the inspection. All pupils have individual risk assessments and care plans to ensure that their needs are fully met. Relationships between pupils and staff are very strong, which leads to pupils being highly motivated to learn. Therefore, no time is wasted

in lessons.

The school effectively supports pupils in making the transition from school to a college or care placement when they leave the school aged 19. The school's own family support officer works closely with families to help them make the best decision. This support continues when pupils have left the school. The senior leadership team and the family support officer continue to make regular checks on the progress that each student is making in their new setting.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked you to ensure that subject leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are well trained to carry them out. Training is provided to staff across the school to improve their skills. In discussions with inspectors, staff said that school leaders take training needs seriously. Subject, middle and senior leaders understand their roles and what they are aiming to achieve. There are now more middle leaders. For example, the new communication coordinator develops the use of visual prompts, such as symbols and other communication aids, across the school, and is responsible for managing the work of the speech and language therapists. There are now leaders for each age phase. They are responsible for monitoring and reporting on pupils' progress. Governors regularly request that middle leaders attend their meetings to report on areas of the school's work. In response to inspectors' questions, inspectors found that middle and phase leaders gave clear and informed answers to questions about their areas of responsibility. However, inspectors also found that the school's improvement plan did not clearly identify which subject and middle leaders were responsible for specific actions, or what resources were allocated.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, staff and governors take safeguarding extremely seriously. They understand the complex needs and vulnerabilities of each pupil. Therefore, there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust, consistently applied and fit for purpose.

The school's safeguarding policy is comprehensive and up to date. The roles of staff responsible for safeguarding are clearly outlined. There is clear information about safeguarding, which is available for staff and parents. There are other policies in place to support the complex needs of pupils, such as moving and handling, and personal and intimate care policies. The school's designated safeguarding lead participates in the local authority's network for staff who have that role, to keep school staff up to date on the latest safeguarding developments.

All staff receive regular training in how to keep children safe. Some staff have also undergone first-aid and paediatric first-aid training. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding policies and procedures, which are followed stringently. They are also highly vigilant in looking for signs of abuse or neglect. Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The school works with external agencies, such as social care, the police and pupils' families, to resolve issues effectively.

The school uses an electronic system that keeps detailed safeguarding records up to date

and confidential, with a clear chronology to show what took place and when.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and they know whom to go to if they have a worry or concern. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the school's curriculum. Parents said that they felt the school is safe for their children to attend.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, inspectors focused particularly on the progress pupils make, attendance and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Robust systems are in place for setting targets for pupils and measuring the progress they make. Targets are set at the start of each year. Teachers update information about pupils' progress every half-term. Phase leaders meet regularly with teachers to identify pupils who are making less than expected progress. For example, it was found that one pupil could not communicate effectively, so the speech and language therapist provided a 'Smart Box', which enabled this pupil to make better progress in English and mathematics.
- School leaders ensure that all staff know the progress made by each pupil. Individual 'achievement profiles' are displayed in every classroom, which show what level pupils are working at and their next steps for learning. In lessons, all staff keep meticulous records of what pupils have learned. This information is used to inform their next learning steps and the overall assessments of each pupil's progress.
- Leaders check the accuracy of teachers' judgements about progress by moderating samples of pupils' work. The school also carries out moderation with other local special and mainstream schools, as well as four schools from around the country. This is a very good way of testing the accuracy of the school's own systems against those of other schools, as well as sharing the best practice available.
- The school works successfully to make sure that all pupils attend school as regularly as possible. Some pupils have complex medical needs that involve them spending time in hospital, attending medical appointments, or being unable to attend school due to illness. When pupils stay in hospital, the school ensures that they can attend lessons provided by the hospital school. For pupils who are persistently absent, the school's procedures for monitoring attendance are followed rigorously. Also, meetings are held between staff from the school and other agencies, for example social care, to look at the reasons for absence. The school's family support officer works closely with parents to find out why pupils are absent and to find ways to increase their attendance.
- Lessons are very carefully planned around the individual needs of pupils. Teachers use sensory experiences to communicate with pupils who are nonverbal. For example, the purpose of one art lesson was to reflect on how rain felt on their skin. Staff used gentle water sprays to allow pupils to experience it for themselves. They then asked for pupils to respond by pointing to an appropriate symbol or picture. In all lessons, there is a wide variety of practical resources available to support learning, which have a positive impact on the progress pupils make.
- High numbers of staff mean that for most of the time, pupils receive individual support with their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils they work with

very well. They are highly effective in the way they communicate with pupils, knowing exactly how much time each pupil needs to process information. Staff are always extremely positive, but they are also persistent in encouraging pupils to achieve their learning goals. This approach enables pupils to make outstanding progress in lessons.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school plans for improvement are sharper and clearer to make them more effective in further enhancing provision and pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Julian Scholefield
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors met with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the two phase leaders, school governors and a selection of school staff. We also spoke with the school improvement adviser from the local authority. We observed pupils on arrival, met with some parents, visited most of the classes, spoke with pupils and looked at pupils' current work. There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to take into consideration.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding records and assessment information about pupils' progress. Inspectors studied the school improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, and also looked at information published on the school's website.