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Mrs Kirsty Rogers
Executive Headteacher
Burton Short Stay School
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DE15 0HR

Dear Mrs Rogers

Short inspection of Burton PRU

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2018 with Susan Lowry and Susan Hickerton, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 January 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

On 1 April 2018, the school joined together with Kettlebrook Short Stay School in a new federation to serve the area of East Staffordshire. A recently appointed executive headteacher provides strategic leadership for the two schools. A single management committee oversees both schools.

As part of this new arrangement, you are providing strong leadership for the school. You are very ably supported by an effective head of school. Together, you have quickly identified strengths and weaknesses in the school and re-established high expectations after a lengthy period of temporary leadership. You have introduced a more organised approach to running the school. You have begun to define senior and middle leaders' roles more clearly, although this needs to be done more quickly, particularly in relation to setting pupils challenging academic targets and tracking progress towards them.

A strikingly positive ethos pervades your school. It is calm and orderly. The learning environment is attractive, welcoming and supportive. Some areas of the school, for example the art room, are particularly inspiring. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils are usually polite and friendly. Pupils benefit from

very high levels of social and emotional support while at the school. This helps them to develop quickly personally and acquire positive attitudes.

Nearly all pupils join your school having experienced serious difficulties or major disruption at their previous school. Only a few arrive with a positive view of the value of education. However, nearly all leave school with more positive attitudes. There are usually more boys than girls, although the number of girls on the roll is increasing, and around a half of all pupils are registered at this school only. Pupils can start at the school at any time during the year. Many stay at the school for a short time only before returning to mainstream schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping pupils safe is a priority for the school. Leaders ensure that risks to pupils are understood and managed effectively. Pupils feel safe in the school and know who to turn to if they have any difficulties. Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts. Pupils' conduct in and around the school is usually very good. They work safely in lessons.

Pupils' attendance and welfare are monitored carefully, including for those pupils attending alternative provision. Careful record keeping, and regular sharing of information help to ensure that all pupils are kept safe and well.

School staff receive regular training in safeguarding. They understand their safeguarding role and are suitably attentive to any potential or likely issues. The school liaises well with outside agencies and follows up referrals and other safeguarding concerns until matters are all properly resolved. Governors are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Suitable checks are made on all those working in or visiting the school.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are sufficiently detailed and organised.

Inspection findings

- During this visit, we considered the key aspects of the school's work. These included safeguarding, improvement since the last inspection, pupils' social and emotional development, pupils' learning and progress, and the quality of alternative provision attended by pupils.
- Since the last inspection, some effective action has been taken to improve the school. For example, pupils are now grouped by their ability and level of prior attainment rather than by their age. This helps teachers set work at the right level for pupils. Alongside this, there is greater emphasis on helping pupils understand what to do when they get things wrong. A new system of 'key workers' has been introduced, which has led to better oversight of how well pupils are progressing personally and socially. However, oversight of academic progress still lacks rigour. Moreover, middle leaders do not have a well-enough defined role in monitoring pupils' academic progress.

- A very strong culture of care pervades the school. Pupils' social and emotional needs are swiftly and accurately identified when they join the school. They are provided with a carefully tailored timetable of support and other activities, which helps them settle in and develop more positive attitudes to education. Strong support from external agencies coupled with impressively positive relationships with staff help pupils develop self-belief, a sense of achievement and optimism about the future.
- Staff respond sensitively and quickly to the pupils' social and emotional needs. As a result, pupils' social and personal development is a major strength of the school. In many instances, pupils make enough progress socially and emotionally so that they return successfully to a mainstream education setting. Pupils usually leave the school well motivated for the next stage of their education and training. In the last three years, all pupils who left at the end of Year 11 went on to further education or training.
- The appointments of the new executive headteacher and the new head of school are leading to higher expectations of the academic outcomes that pupils can achieve. Pupils benefit from a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, which are adapted to reflect each individual's interest and needs. Learning in the classroom is complemented by a lively outdoor education programme, including trips to museums and other places of interests.
- Most pupils who stay at the school until the end of Year 11 achieve a range of qualifications, including at GCSE. Although this represents significant success for many pupils, it does not always represent enough progress from their initial starting points. Pupils are not set challenging enough academic targets in all subjects when they join the school, and routine assessment of their progress is not frequent enough. In some instances, pupils can join and leave the school before any significant formal assessment takes place. In others, pupils' gains or delays in progress are not picked up quickly enough for teachers to adjust their approach or lesson content. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress in lessons that they could.
- A significant number of pupils attend alternative provision for a part of their education. Access to this provision is well managed and carefully organised. Pupils attending alternative provision are supported very well, and their attendance and welfare are monitored carefully. Pupils behave very well and speak enthusiastically about the different experiences and activities offered.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' roles are clarified quickly, including those of middle leaders, so that it is clear who is responsible for setting challenging academic targets and tracking progress towards them
- assessment of academic progress is frequent enough that teachers and leaders can report and act quickly on gains or delays in pupils' learning
- academic targets for pupils in each subject are sufficiently challenging.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, 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

During the inspection, we visited lessons and observed pupils at work. We spoke with pupils and looked at their work in books and folders. We spoke with teachers about their work. We met with senior leaders, members of the management committee and a member of staff from another local school. We spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner. We scrutinised a range of documents, including information about safeguarding, pupils' destinations after leaving the school and pupil progress. We took account of seven responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire and two responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.