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Mr Geoff Allen  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Allen

### **Short inspection of Westfield School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2018 with Simon Yates, 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 February 2014.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since the previous inspection, the designation of the school has changed and the types of special needs that the school caters for has, accordingly, also changed. You have designed a new curriculum to meet these changes, while maintaining the ethos and culture of the school that: 'enables pupils to make progress towards being independent individuals who can organise and manage themselves as learners and members of a community'.

You and your team have developed a happy and supportive learning community. Positive and caring relationships between staff and pupils were evident throughout the school on the day that inspectors visited. Pupils are happy to come to school, and one parent told us that their child would even like to come at weekends. The whole-school breakfast club provides pupils with a very calm start to the day. Pupils have the opportunity to speak to an adult about anything worrying them, before the formal lessons start. This means that all the time in class can be focused on learning. The introduction of the forest school has proved very popular with pupils. The activities successfully help to build pupils' communication skills, as well as developing their problem-solving, planning and risk-assessment skills.

Leaders have developed useful research links with a university, which has been used to give staff greater understanding of the needs of the pupils at the school. Leaders have developed the specialist curriculum around this research. The

curriculum builds social-thinking skills in the pupils, as well as emotional control. Leaders are developing ways for parents and carers to be able to continue this work at home as well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare remain strengths of the school. Staff and parents agree that pupils' behaviour is managed very well. Your new curriculum combines specialist, social and emotional learning alongside academic subject learning. You have recognised that you now need to build on your work to identify ways to stretch the academic learning of the most able pupils, without inhibiting their progress in these other areas.

The governing body knows the strengths of the school very well. Governors are enthusiastic about the school and have a strong level of involvement. They are aware that they have a shared responsibility for putting checks in place, rather than relying on the roles of individual governors.

Parents are extremely positive about the school, and are very pleased with the way that their children have developed with their behaviour and communication skills. They said how much their children enjoy coming to this school. One parent stated that leaders and all teachers 'go the extra mile' to ensure the best for their children, as they understand the challenges that children at the school face. Parents who met with an inspector said that their children had improved in all aspects of their learning and are becoming much more independent with their work. They did say, however, that they would appreciate more communication about the academic progress of their children.

Staff enjoy their work at the school, saying that they feel very well supported by leaders in all aspects of their work. Middle leaders are passionate and dedicated in their work. They have a clear vision for how they will refine the new curriculum so that it matches the needs of all pupils, and the most able in particular.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders are relentless in ensuring that the school is a happy, safe and secure place in which pupils can learn and progress. Staff are regularly trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They clearly know and understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Safeguarding is a focus within weekly staff meetings. The single central record of staff suitability checks meets all requirements, and there is a strong induction process for new staff. Members of the governing body have completed safer recruitment training, and there is a named governor for safeguarding who checks paperwork and practice on a regular basis.

During the inspection, and in the pupil survey, pupils reported that they feel safe at school. They know who to speak to if they have a problem. Parents also told us that their children feel happy and safe at school and they are confident in the way that any issues are dealt with.

## Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at: how leaders have developed the assessment and reporting system across the school, and the effectiveness of feedback to pupils in order that they can improve their work; how well disadvantaged pupils are supported to succeed and achieve; and the work of middle leaders and its impact on the progress of pupils in their individual areas.
- Following the re-designation of the school, you developed assessment and reporting systems for the new curriculum, which combines specialist learning with social and emotional learning and academic learning. The curriculum now addresses more closely the needs of the pupils in the school. Leaders are working with other schools to ensure that assessments of pupils on entry to the school and target setting also fit with the profiles of the pupils. Twice-termly progress meetings with class teachers are held to check whether pupils are on track to meet their targets. The progress of all groups of pupils, such as boys, girls, and those pupils who are disadvantaged, measured in this way is broadly similar.
- At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to develop pupils' skills in writing frequently enough, and for different purposes, in lessons other than English. You were also asked to ensure that pupils make more use of their problem-solving skills in mathematics. To look at this, inspectors visited classrooms, accompanied either by a senior or a middle leader. In most lessons visited, pupils were engaged in their work, and teachers and learning support assistants were providing effective support by challenging pupils to help their thinking.
- Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' books. They found many examples of pupils' writing in subjects other than English, and evidence of good progress over time was found in pupils' handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation. This was because teachers are carrying out the school's policy of ensuring that high-quality feedback is given to pupils to help them to improve. The development of pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics was also evident in books that inspectors scrutinised. Pupils' skills have been focused on and developed. Pupils told inspectors that they really enjoyed the work they do as part of the forest schools initiative.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to ensure that pupils have the support, equipment and access to activities that they need in order to make the best possible progress. Leaders are determined to ensure that every pupil is able to achieve their potential. Governors and leaders are aware that the impact of the funding should be assessed with greater precision.
- Staff reported to inspectors that they feel very well supported by senior leaders in their work. Middle leaders in particular are passionate and enthusiastic about their input into the new curriculum. They explained that senior leaders are very supportive of their work and ensure that all their training needs are met. They rightly acknowledged that the development of the new curriculum now needs to become embedded in the school, and that appropriate challenge can be given to all pupils, including the more able, while still ensuring that pupils' social and emotional development is not compromised.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new curriculum is fully embedded, and each individual pupil is given the appropriate level of challenge they need to reach their academic potential
- their children's progress is explained carefully to parents
- governors are more tightly focused in their challenge of school leaders to demonstrate the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Edwards

**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, your senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. I met with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors. My colleague met with a group of parents. I also met with a representative from the local authority.

We visited classrooms, accompanied by senior leaders, to collect a range of evidence relating to teaching, learning and assessment. My colleague met with a group of pupils to talk about their experience of school and aspects of safeguarding. We scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, and pupils' files and books. We took account of 23 sets of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. We also took account of responses to the online pupil questionnaires and staff questionnaires.