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Mrs Claire Patton
Executive Headteacher
The Sullivan Centre
172 Boulevard
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Dear Mrs Patton

Short inspection of The Sullivan Centre

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 2018 with Suzette Garland-Grimes, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous 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 specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have created a strong leadership team that reflects your vision to provide the very best education and pastoral support for the pupils who attend your school. You have appointed an experienced pastoral care and mentoring team whose members provide extremely high levels of support to pupils. The recent appointment of a head of school shows a determination to strengthen leadership further. Dedicated support staff complete your valuable team.

You have an absolute understanding of the needs of each pupil and your determination to ensure that they each receive opportunities that will provide them with a positive future is enviable. Pupils report that they appreciate being at the school and feel safe in the small environment that it offers. They feel that staff support them well and note that using 'my safety plan' means they are secure in the knowledge that their individual needs are consistently met. Pupils discuss their increased confidence due to the support of staff and the high expectations and belief that they will be able to return to a mainstream school in the future. Pupils acknowledge that they have all made significant progress both in their academic studies and in their well-being. Pupils display highly positive attitudes and are

articulate and confident speakers.

The school has a rich curriculum that incorporates many aspects of modern life, building on knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils are encouraged to mentor each other, their reflective logs displaying a great sense of empathy and understanding of the issues some young people face. They encourage one another to attend school, showing a high level of understanding about the opportunities they are given.

Teaching is strong. Staff use questioning well in lessons to promote higher understanding and to assess the progress of pupils. They use assessment information effectively and provide pupils with an appropriate level of work that both challenges them and develops their self-confidence. Learning environments are bright and carefully structured to support areas of learning. The expectation for the presentation of work is high and this is reflected in pupils' workbooks.

The communication with, and involvement of parents and carers are testament to the school's success. Parents talk about how 'life-changing' their child's attendance at the school has been, with the impact felt not only by the pupil but by the whole family. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work that the school does. This includes the methods used to introduce a pupil to the school at an individually structured pace, ensuring that the pupil is ready to begin this part of their development and education.

Members of the governing body are highly experienced and appropriately skilled. They understand the school and its purpose well. Governors provide a good level of challenge to the school leaders, some visiting the school regularly. This means that they have a secure and accurate understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has a very strong safeguarding culture in which all staff see it as their responsibility to keep children safe. Leaders ensure that all relevant checks that are required for those working with children are in place. Staff receive regular and effective training and are up to date with current legislation. They are clear and confident on procedures they must follow if they have any concerns.

Pupils have lessons about keeping safe and protecting themselves when online. Pupils have staff members they can trust and whom they can talk to about concerns or sensitive matters. Pupils feel safe at this school.

The school works exceptionally well with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that individual needs are met quickly and effectively. Strong relationships have been built and this is reflected in the timely services that the school receives.

Inspection findings

- Historically, the pupils at The Sullivan Centre have had significant difficulties with their attendance at their mainstream schools due to anxiety-related issues or identified special educational needs. Typically, pupils may not have attended school for over a year. The school has a robust system in place to encourage pupils to attend, including a bespoke transition package, experienced counselling staff and a relevant and interesting curriculum. Pupils increase their previous attendance substantially while at the school, often to between 90% and 100% within the first two terms. They then sustain this attendance throughout their time at the school. Owing to the increased attendance and the input of staff to assist in overcoming previous difficulties, pupils' progress is strong. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are keen to rapidly improve.
- Behaviour at school is very positive. Pupils understand the need to behave responsibly and understand the impact that negative behaviour can have on others. Very occasionally, negative behaviour can occur. When this happens, it is dealt with well by staff and it does not affect other pupils. Pupils report that there is no bullying at this school, but believe that if there were any incidents, they would be dealt with appropriately by staff. Staff are highly trained in effective techniques used to de-escalate issues and motivate vulnerable pupils. They use this training well and it is clear to see in everyday practice at the school.
- Teachers use a wide variety of strategies to provide interesting and motivating lessons. This encourages enthusiasm and pupils engage readily. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that they are setting appropriate work for pupils. They use relevant topics that are meaningful to pupils in order for pupils to reach a greater level of understanding. For example, older pupils were using their mathematical skills to plan, cost and structure a 16th birthday party. Pupils are prepared well for the future through the use of problem-solving life skills and ownership of their progress passports. On occasion, pupils receive too much support and this prevents them from increasing their independent learning skills.
- The hospital classroom provides a positive and consistent approach to the provision of education for pupils. Some pupils will attend for only one day, while others will attend for longer periods of time. The teacher and support staff offer an interesting range of activities matched to the needs of each pupil. Pupils who attend for five days or more have individual learning plans with appropriate targets. The classroom is a bright and attractive learning environment. When pupils at the hospital are unable to attend the classroom, bedside lessons take place. Staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and respond to medical interventions well. Pupils who attend the hospital provision can receive input on particular areas of learning that they may have struggled with at school. For example, a pupil had asked for input regarding algebra to increase their understanding.
- The leadership team has a good understanding of the position of the school and is continuing to increase its capacity to meet the increasing needs and numbers of pupils. The trust supports the leadership of the school well and it has plans in place for further improvement of the school site. Pupils are at the forefront of all decisions made by the management of the school. Although the leadership team does produce a significant amount of data analysis for the school, the impact of

its work on pupils' progress is not always evident in its presentation of the data.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff provide pupils with more opportunities for independent learning to enable them to become well equipped for their return to a mainstream school
- evaluation of assessment information provides a sharper overview of pupils' progress linked to leaders' actions.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for The City of Kingston upon Hull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sara Roe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we carried out a variety of activities to gather evidence about the quality of education at the school. We held meetings with you and a number of other school leaders and middle leaders. We visited classrooms and observed four lessons with you. We analysed the school's tracking systems relating to pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and exclusions. We met with governors, representatives from the academy trust and with a number of pupils and staff. We considered five responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, together with information from two parent meetings, 15 pupil surveys and seven staff surveys. We also scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its work, minutes from governing body meetings and the school development plan.