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19 June 2018

Mrs H Boardman
Headteacher
Hailey Hall School
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Dear Mrs Boardman

Short inspection of Hailey Hall School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 2018 with John Craig HMI, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last 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 will be a full section 5 inspection.

You and your senior team provide determined and well-informed leadership. Through this positive and creative direction, the school has both maintained and improved the good quality of education since the last inspection and standards are rising. Your staff team works effectively to ensure that the needs of every pupil are met, so that Hailey Hall is a positive place for young people to learn. The mantra of 'every child an individual; not a stereotype' is strong among your staff team. As a result, your school is a welcoming and safe environment where pupils happily engage in their learning and thrive as individuals.

It is apparent, through all that you do, that you place young people and their aspirations at the centre of your work. Your team of skilled and highly trained staff support every individual to ensure that they are able to progress, both in their academic attainment and in their wider skills and attributes. Pupils are happy at school and staff effectively support them to develop personal and social skills. Pupils say that they are proud of their work and their school. All areas of the school are well kept, and display high-quality work which demonstrates the expectations teachers have of pupils. Classrooms and other learning environments are stimulating, as well as thoughtfully reflecting the range of pupils' needs.

At the last inspection you were asked to improve one aspect of the school's work. This was to improve teaching by consistently promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. The work you have undertaken with your staff team to support pupils to understand the purpose of their learning has engaged them positively. Teachers' good understanding of how to develop pupils' literacy skills through subject teaching means that they are setting work at the right level for individual pupils' needs. In addition, teachers give thoughtful guidance to pupils to help them improve their work and pupils respond very positively, producing work with increasing accuracy. As a result, they make at least good progress. Work in numeracy is helping pupils understand how to effectively use their developing range of skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. As a result, safeguarding is effective. All staff make safeguarding their business. Leaders ensure that it is given the highest priority. Staff consistently follow and adhere to safeguarding policies. Procedures are well managed by all. However, there are occasions when there is confusion about how the attendance of pupils is recorded. While this does not put them at risk, it should be rectified.

The required checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with pupils are in place: governors monitor the effectiveness of these checks regularly. Comprehensive records are kept by the safeguarding team and are well managed. A strong example of practice is the rigorous system in place for logging 'causes for concern'. The meticulous monitoring of this system by senior leaders ensures that trends are identified and managed. For example, in 2015/16 an increase of logged concerns relating to the use of drugs triggered a rapid and appropriate response. As a result, staff are now appropriately trained and able to effectively support pupils to make good choices.

Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and receive regular updates relating to national and local developments. Consequently, all staff have a sound understanding of the statutory requirements. For example, 'Prevent' training has been provided in school; staff have then shared this with parents and alternative providers used by the school to ensure that pupils are kept safe in all environments.

Inspection findings

- Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that they have support from staff, who understand their needs and adapt provision to enable them to succeed. They said that they are treated like individuals and always have a place to go when they need help. They also say that they feel valued by the staff team and by friends who enjoy their company. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to learn, and make the most of these.
- The detailed analysis of pupils' behaviour shows that leaders and staff have a good understanding of complex and challenging behaviour. Together they manage individual needs effectively and carefully, which helps pupils to continue

their learning successfully. When difficulties do occur, the creative planning and flexibility put in place for individuals lead to changes that are effective and well managed.

- Pupils generally behave well in class and lessons are calm and purposeful. They also behave well at the less structured breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils happily play games and communicate well with their peers and with the adults, who engage effectively with them. However, while high-quality recording of behaviour sits well alongside your detailed academic progress tracking, you do not yet have a way to use both sets of information together to give a full picture of each pupil's progress.
- Staff accurately assess pupils' needs and learning when they arrive at school. This provides clear baseline information from which a package of support and challenge to enable pupils to be successful is planned. You create opportunities to compare your assessments with other schools in order to make sure that pupils' progress is as rapid as it can be and is at least good. Staff compile detailed information on pupils which is well used to inform effective planning and to make sure that lessons are interesting and challenging.
- Pupils are carefully prepared for adulthood, being supported to learn using appropriate courses and qualifications. Their learning is extended through carefully considered opportunities for work experience and a focus on developing their wider skills such as being able to travel independently.
- Staff provide pupils with exceptional support and opportunities to understand what is expected of them as they transition both into and out of the school. Prior to joining the school, Year 6 pupils spend a week learning about their new environment during the preceding term. After this, they are offered additional experiences through summer school. This enables new pupils to meet staff, to develop a knowledge of the school site and to meet some of their peers. As a result, they arrive with increasing confidence. Evidence shows that pupils who participate in these opportunities settle and start to make progress quickly.
- Pupils' transitions to the next stage of their education are equally well managed. Pupils move on to an appropriate college or supported work placement, with some then attending university and pursuing a range of qualifications including Master's degrees.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Leaders and staff help pupils to believe in their own abilities, to thrive and to grow in confidence. Leaders have employed a mental health practitioner to support pupils' personal development and emotional well-being. Pupils said that they find this support helpful.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- current strengths are sustained and further developed through learning from innovative and successful expertise both from within school and in the wider field of special educational needs and/or disabilities

- methods of recording the attendance of pupils are improved
- systems for tracking all aspects of pupils' progress are further developed to ensure that pupils' learning and personal development, including their self-management of behaviour, are incorporated in one place, so that all aspects of progress can be monitored.

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

Yours sincerely

Mary Rayner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with you, the deputy headteachers and some teaching staff, a group of pupils, a governor and a representative from the local authority. I spoke to you about your self-evaluation and the school development plan. Together we carried out a series of learning walks where we visited lessons with senior leaders. A range of the school's own analyses and planning was considered, pupils' progress information was discussed, and safeguarding documentation and other records were scrutinised. Inspectors observed pupils in class, during break and at lunchtime.