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Mrs Sarah Wild  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Wild

### **Short inspection of Limpsfield Grange School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2018 with John Bosley, 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 December 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your inspirational leadership has created a culture of continuing excellence. You are highly ambitious for your pupils and have a deep commitment to the school. Leaders and staff take the time to ensure that they have a detailed knowledge of each pupil and their individual needs. This enables the staff team to provide the right support. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress from their starting points, both in their academic and personal development.

Limpsfield Grange provides specialist provision for girls with autistic spectrum disorder. The school leads on research nationally in the field of female autistic spectrum disorder. Leaders train other professionals so they can develop effective strategies to support girls in their schools. Autistic spectrum disorder in girls presents very differently to the same need in boys. Additionally, the majority of girls at Limpsfield Grange experience very high levels of anxiety and poor mental and emotional health. Leaders know this is a major barrier to the girls' well-being and, as a result, their ability to achieve academically. You and your leaders have therefore developed the, 'Well-being, Achievement, Communication, and Independence' (WACI) curriculum. You rightly recognise that this approach is central to all of the school's work. Leaders hope that further development of this curriculum will lead to improved mental, emotional, physical and well-being outcomes for all pupils. Parents and carers are very positive about the difference the school has made to their children. One parent said: 'Since starting at Limpsfield Grange, we have seen a huge difference in our daughter. Our child is much happier in every aspect of her life. Her confidence and resilience are growing daily and she

is learning to deal with situations she finds difficult.' Pupils are also positive about their school and enjoy lessons. They are highly aware of their own anxieties and are extremely supportive of each other. During lesson observations, we saw that pupils' behaviour was excellent and all participated in learning with enthusiasm. Pupils' books show the pride they have in their work and their commitment to achieving their best.

The governing body is a highly skilled team with a relentless focus on raising standards to ensure outstanding outcomes for all pupils. It presents a high degree of challenge to senior leaders, and individual governors regularly carry out monitoring visits. In addition to talking to leaders and staff, governors take the time to hold highly successful afternoon tea parties with the pupils. The governing body knows the school well, holds leaders to account effectively and sets challenging targets for the school's improvement.

At the last inspection, inspectors highlighted the school's many strengths. They also recommended that teaching enables all pupils to make their best progress in every lesson. Through your determined leadership, you have created a community where leaders and staff are committed to ensuring that pupils make the most of every learning opportunity. As a result, pupils, including the disadvantaged, make outstanding progress from their starting points. The previous inspection report also recommended that teachers evaluate the impact of teaching assistants' work on pupils' progress regularly. The school has addressed this by providing extensive training for all staff to ensure that everyone knows the pupils' levels and their next steps to make progress. Additionally, leaders have created teaching assistants' posts that are subject specific. This has been extremely successful and ensures that all pupils are supported by subject specialists to achieve the highest outcomes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team places pupils' safety at the heart of the school's work. Consequently, there is a very strong safeguarding culture in the school. Robust recruitment and background checks are carried out to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with pupils. Comprehensive training, including regular safeguarding updates, ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Record keeping is meticulous and any concern is dealt with quickly. The school has excellent relationships with parents and outside agencies, working cooperatively with them to support pupils. The safeguarding governor conducts announced and unannounced termly visits to monitor the school's safeguarding procedures. As a result, governors are confident that the school is effective and proactive in its work to safeguard pupils.

Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school, they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they need support. Teachers in 'live life well' lessons, and in other subjects, teach pupils successfully how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils said they are taught not to talk to people they do not know when online, and how to say 'no' if they are asked to do something they know is wrong.

## Inspection findings

- Systems to assess pupils' progress are well established. Prior to starting at Limpsfield Grange, pupils have often failed to thrive in their mainstream settings. Leaders and staff take the time to ensure that they gain a highly detailed understanding of each new pupil's individual needs and circumstances, thus enabling each pupil's exceptionally smooth transition into the school.
- Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills well below the levels typical for pupils of their age. Leaders carefully assess pupils on arrival to establish their starting points accurately. You and your leadership team are ambitious for pupils and devise individual targets that are achievable but also challenging. Where pupils are not making expected progress, carefully devised interventions are put in place. As a result, the school's most recent assessment tracking information shows that pupils, including the disadvantaged, make very strong progress.
- Leaders have created a personalised approach to curriculum development, adapting planning to meet the varying needs of pupils. This approach enables all pupils to fully access a mainstream-style curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is designed to not only enable pupils to make outstanding progress, but also to develop their communication and independence skills, and promote well-being. The school is set in large, beautiful grounds and outdoor learning is a key feature of individual programmes. Several animals are kept in the grounds that pupils help to look after, including goats and alpacas. Your leadership team has identified that pupils' access to learning can be hindered by their poor mental and emotional health. Therefore, you have plans to further develop the school's WACI curriculum to improve pupils' resilience and enhance their emotional well-being.
- Leaders expertly take pupils' career aspirations into account when designing their personalised learning. This ensures that pupils' courses prepare them for their future pathways in education or training. At key stage 4, all pupils take accredited courses, and this enables the most able pupils to go on to access level 3 qualification routes. As a result, all pupils leave with qualifications appropriate to their ability. Your staff team work relentlessly with parents and providers to ensure that all pupils move on confidently to the next stage of their education or training. Parents are very grateful for all the support they receive. One parent commented: 'We are excited about what our daughter can achieve in the future, instead of being fearful of what it might hold.' Last year, all pupils successfully transitioned to their next placement, and the majority of pupils from previous years are still attending their courses or are in employment.
- The school has clear structures to follow up poor attendance. These are having a positive impact and attendance is on an upward trajectory. Leaders work proactively with parents to improve the attendance of all pupils. Many pupils who join Limpsfield Grange have been out of their mainstream schools for prolonged periods. However, once they become a pupil at Limpsfield, their attendance improves dramatically.
- The school day is highly structured and pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is exceptional. Staff work with pupils to manage their feelings of anxiety, and pupils

are supported to use the strategies taught to regulate their own behaviour. As an outcome, incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively, resulting in a considerable reduction in fixed-term exclusions.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's approach to building pupils' resilience and well-being is enhanced, to strengthen academic and personal development and equip pupils to succeed.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Conway

**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, my colleague and I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the school's leadership team and the chair and vice chair of governors. I also spoke on the telephone to your school improvement partner. We visited classes in all key stages to observe pupils' learning, talk with pupils about their progress, and look at their books. All lesson observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team. We spoke to a group of pupils and a few teaching assistants. We looked at 14 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, including nine free-text comments, and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys from 18 pupils and 31 members of staff. We looked at a range of documentation, including information about: the work of governors; safeguarding; the curriculum; and assessment. We examined the school's analysis of pupils' progress and attainment, leaders' self-evaluation and their plans for improvement.