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Mrs Catherine Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Smith

Short inspection of Haywood Grove School

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 2018 with Sharon Wilson, 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 October 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 last inspection, you have worked hard to ensure that leaders and staff focus their work on improving the outcomes for pupils. You have used innovative approaches to help support the challenges your pupils face. You are tireless in your resolve to ensure that every pupil who attends Haywood Grove has the skills needed for the next stage of their education. The school has taken appropriate action to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Pupils try their best and are enthusiastic to share their work with others. They are rightly proud of their achievements. Most pupils have had a difficult time in their education before coming to Haywood Grove. Here, they develop a sense of how they can manage the social and emotional challenges they have. This is a distinct culture that you and your leadership team have developed. You have created a safe school in which pupils can thrive. Under your leadership, the pupils learn the skills they need to cooperate and build relationships with each other, staff and visitors. One staff member said, 'The capacity to learn and grow is immeasurable, in a culture of support'.

Leaders, teachers and the pupils themselves understand that lessons are matched to pupils' specific needs and interests. Lessons are engaging, creating a dynamic learning environment. During the inspection, you could clearly show the deep thought and planning you put into each pupil's curriculum. Class sizes were varied, teaching styles were varied and the subjects being covered were extensive and well planned. You and your staff are

passionate about recording pupils' progress and the approaches that work best for individual pupils. This information is linked thoughtfully into strategies and skills that support pupils to move on to the next stage in their learning or to their next educational setting. Leaders spoke with deep knowledge about what was being done to overcome and limit each pupil's barriers to learning.

Your leadership team, and more recently governors, have an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. You have increased the depth and accuracy of information available to leaders, through a range of new procedures to check on the quality and effectiveness of the school's work. One of these measures tracks both academic attainment and the pupils' ability to manage their social and emotional responses. However, some of these new procedures need to be sharpened and embedded further.

You are dogged in your determination to improve attendance. Leaders were able to present accurate records showing the care and consideration taken to try to achieve the best outcomes for pupils. This included the occasions where pupils have had time out of school and you have worked diligently to ensure a successful reintegration.

You have invested heavily in training for your staff to develop aspects of the curriculum and make it more accessible to pupils. Staff talk of 'a culture of support' where 'we are all listened to'. One member of staff explained to inspectors that leaders 'always want to give the staff opportunities'.

Your governors are embracing these changes. They have developed a clearer view of how they are perceived by the community. You are working hard with them to ensure that they have the right mix of skills to aid the school's progress in the future. Governors find your reports to the governing body to be informative and the chair of governors talks openly of the real improvements over recent years. These include staff and pupil relationships, how the staff manage physical behaviours and the focus of support for pupils to manage their emotions. While governors are aware of the speed of change, they spoke of how they need to have further training with leaders on some of the new processes and procedures used in school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a priority for the whole community and this reflects the specific needs of pupils and their families. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of a high quality. Leaders keep staff up to date about safeguarding matters through a regular programme of training, updates and reminders. All staff have received training across a range of safeguarding and child protection issues. Staff understand what to do if they have any concerns that a pupil is at risk.

Parents and pupils are aware of the work the school does to keep its pupils safe. Pupils are confident that staff look after them well. They say they feel safe and know how to seek help from staff when needed.

You undertake appropriate checks on staff who are in your employment. However, we identified during the inspection that there has not been enough quality assurance or review

of the recording and administration of staff recruitment. As a result, records are not always well maintained or easily checked.

Where parents and carers raise concerns or have the need to make complaints, inspectors were able to see accurate records for each issue. This included all work, response and actions by multi-agency partners. The outcomes reached were shared appropriately with those families.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at three lines of enquiry. The first line of enquiry looked at how well leaders and staff support pupils' individual needs and improve their attendance, given their significant vulnerabilities. Attendance is currently close to the national average. However, there has been a variation and recent spike in fixed-term exclusions. Leaders and governors are clear about the specific reasons for this. You were also able to show how these exclusions are on a downward trend, even with the numbers on the roll growing.
- You have done a considerable amount with your school community on understanding and supporting emotional and social needs. This means pupils are able to understand their emotional level and are developing skills and strategies to manage this. Pupils' behaviour and their approach to the learning, while at times challenging, is often excellent. Staff provide a deep range of support and extra-curricular activities. This includes play therapists to support the most vulnerable pupils. Based on the evidence you have gathered about the impact of this work, you are expanding this specialist provision and continuing to invest heavily in this area. Leaders understand the complex challenges of this community. Leaders agreed with inspectors that the proportion of pupils temporarily excluded from school needs to be closely monitored.
- The second line of enquiry looked at how effectively leaders had addressed the areas for improvement set at the last inspection. These were to improve the environment, curriculum and behaviour of pupils. The curriculum improvements have already been reported. The learning environment has improved with enormous work going into distinct areas. You have added seven gardens to classes. These include outdoor gym facilities, a multi-use sports pitch, a play area, a pond and a landscaped field. This wealth of outdoor opportunities is enjoyed by staff and pupils throughout the school day. Leaders ensure that these areas are used well to extend learning within the curriculum. Some internal areas of the school are worn. We agreed that the next challenge for the school will be to ensure that these are improved.
- Classroom displays are planned thoughtfully to match the needs of the pupils in each class. Some classes have calmer displays that have been designed to be more accessible to pupils with specific needs, for example autistic spectrum disorder. Other displays have vibrant colours and content to provide more stimulation and interest, reflecting the distinct needs of pupils in certain classes. Some smaller classes have areas where daily work is displayed and then filed as a constant reminder of the achievements of the pupils.
- When improving behaviour, leaders have a clear vision of the skills pupils need to acquire in order to move on successfully to the next stage of their education. This specifically targets their ability to regulate and understand their emotional state. Pupils

are taught to recognise problematic feelings as they arise, and practise strategies to return themselves into a calm state to continue with their learning. The success of this is reflected in the greatly diminished use of physical intervention. Leaders and the whole-school community are rightfully proud of this.

- The third line of enquiry looked at how you check pupils' attainment on entry, how you check their progress and how well pupils achieve over time. Staff assess pupils on entry to gain a baseline of their ability and interests. There is a clear plan of engagement with pupils and their families, prior to them joining the school. This links to an initial taster session and, over a very short period, access to full-time education. This works well, and responds to the difficult history many of your pupils have had in education. Many pupils have been out of school through exclusion for prolonged periods.
- You have created a bespoke system in school to record assessment information. Based on clear research and initial results, you use this information to plan accurately for the needs of your pupils. While all can see the importance and value of this system, you agreed with me that this needs further monitoring before its full impact will be seen.
- Leaders make sure that transition arrangements for each pupil are appropriate to meet their needs. This means that, as they move on to their next educational setting, they are very well supported. Staff are clear about the importance of these transitions and share your high expectations for each pupil.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the high-quality learning environment that exists in some areas is extended throughout other parts of the school
- newly introduced assessment procedures are embedded further and are thoroughly evaluated to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to rise
- governors share a full understanding of the procedures and processes being used within the school and their impact on pupils' outcomes.

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

Fyfe Johnston

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We held meetings with you, leaders, pupils and a group of staff. We also met with governors and a school effectiveness partner from the local authority. We observed pupils learning in different lessons throughout the school. This was done jointly with you or other senior leaders. We looked at work in lessons. We observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. We spoke with pupils informally and met with a representative group. We reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, behaviour, administration and your monitoring of teaching and learning. We looked at the school's self-evaluation and development plans. We also considered four responses from parents and carers on Parent View, and two emails from parents. We considered 11 staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.