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Mrs Karen Ingham  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Ingham

### **Short inspection of Cloughside College**

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 2018 with Julie Bather, 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 June 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 your appointment in April 2017, you have quickly secured the trust and backing of staff. They feel supported and appreciate the opportunities you and knowledgeable governors provide for their professional development. As a result, there is high staff morale. Pupils, parents and carers spoken to by the inspectors speak highly of the school. For example, parents' comments include: 'staff have boosted confidence', 'there is a really person-centred approach' and 'they have really caught up in their work and are now taking GCSE English'. Pupils' comments included: 'this is the best school I've ever been at' and 'staff are aware of all pupils' needs'.

Governors have overseen a number of changes in staffing and leadership, including your own appointment. However, they have not been distracted from their strong focus upon teaching and learning. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is never less than good, an improvement since the last inspection. Consequently, pupils make good progress towards their agreed targets in learning, behaviour, attendance and emotional well-being.

Most pupils make successful returns to their mainstream schools or transfer to appropriate special school or specialist provision. Pupils who sit examinations at the school achieve a range of accreditations from Entry Level 1 functional skills awards up to higher grade GCSEs, for example, in English and mathematics.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school's work. Classrooms are nurturing and welcoming. At the Junction 17 site, the school's pet dog provides a wonderful focus of care and attention for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions, for example when planning activities to raise funds for local charities.

The staff team work extremely well in partnership with other professionals in health and social services so that there is consistency in the education and treatment pupils receive. There have been measured increases in pupils' attendance in both of the school sites; there is still room for further improvement in terms of how information about pupils' attendance, whether in the school or on the wards, can be collected and analysed.

Other senior leaders and subject leaders make strong contributions towards improving the school, for example in regard to how the curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of each pupil.

You have successfully resolved the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You carry out rigorous checks on teaching to ensure consistency and ensure that staff work flexibly on behalf of pupils with complex needs.

Based on our evidence and discussion, we identified some priorities in extending your links with local secondary schools and post-16 providers so that you can check on the progress pupils with social and emotional mental health needs make over time. Also, we spoke about how your school improvement plan can be more focused upon your vision statement and less upon day-to-day management issues.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school ensures that thorough checks are made before recruiting new staff. As a result, pupils are provided with a safe learning environment in which they thrive. There are strict procedures in regard to the filing and storage of information relating to child protection or children in need. These are overseen by the Health Trust and shared with the designated school safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding and related policies, including for risk assessments, behaviour and anti-bullying, are reviewed and agreed by the governing body. There is a named governor who monitors policies and practices in the school. Inspectors observed a morning briefing for school staff and a health professional where it is clear that there is a strong culture of safeguarding between the wards and school. For example, risk assessments for individual pupils are revised where additional risks have been identified. Safeguarding training, for example in internet safety, for staff and governors has also contributed towards the culture of safeguarding.

Pupils are well-supervised at all times, although they are given opportunities to make decisions and to develop independence, for example in running stalls at school-based charity events. They show tolerance, respect and regard for each other during unstructured times. Pupils spoken to in each of the units and on the

wards express how much they value the work of staff in teaching, supporting and keeping them safe in school.

## **Inspection findings**

- There were a number of key lines of enquiry which were discussed and agreed at the start of the inspection. The first of these was in regard to how well leaders and governors have sustained the good levels of provision since the school was last inspected.
- You and governors have managed a number of changes, especially in regard to staffing and leadership, with success. As a result, you have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, school improvement planning does not include enough details on pupils, such as their attendance. This makes it difficult to analyse precisely the small steps of progress pupils make. There is also the need to gather and record information about the progress of pupils who enter the school and then move on, either back to their mainstream schools or other appropriate provision. You recognise that it will be invaluable for the local authority and other regional authorities to have information that monitors the impact of the school's provision on the emotional and mental well-being of pupils over time.
- You have understandably had to deal with a number of difficult situations as they have arisen since your appointment, often due to staff changes. For example, you have ensured that there is strong, daily partnership working between your staff team and health professionals so that pupils are managed and taught consistently well through a personalised approach and in accordance with pupils' ongoing needs. You and other leaders are now in a position to ensure the school improvement plan focuses less upon day-to-day policies and procedures. These routines are now well-established and the focus needs to relate more to the stated vision of 'inspiring young people to achieve a brighter future'.
- You have ensured that the school is part of the Bury Secondary Learning Collaborative. You and governors recognise that you now have the capacity to promote effective partnership working in the support of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs locally and thus extend the impact of your provision more widely so that you benefit provision for vulnerable pupils in other schools.
- The next key line of enquiry we considered related to how well pupils progress from entry to the school to when they leave. You have ensured that accurate information is gathered by your teachers about each pupil on entry to the school at whatever age or key stage, including learners following 16 to 19 study programmes. Class groups are organised according to the ongoing needs of pupils and can include pupils of different ages. Links with pupils' home schools, even those living in other local authorities, have improved. As a result, pupils' previous attainments alongside your own assessments provide the information needed to produce individual learning programmes, which have led to pupils' good progress against their individual targets.
- Inspectors were able to observe teaching and learning in both of the sites. Based

upon their observations, they agreed with your positive assessment of the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers make effective use of a range of information about each pupil when planning their lessons. Pupils are fully engaged and have positive attitudes to learning. For example, pupils in the Gardener Unit responded well when provided with opportunities to engage in practical activities, such as wood-turning and catering. They develop independence and confidence when making items which are then sold at school charity events. They also learn about healthy eating and physical well-being through catering and physical education lessons. Pupils attending Junction 17 benefit from individual support and teaching in mathematics. This is effective because pupils' learning and understanding is divided into steps that pupils understand, as seen in their work on subtraction and when engaged in creative art work.

- Inspectors considered other evidence in pupils' workbooks, by chatting to pupils and in school records of courses and accreditation achieved by pupils. It is clear that pupils make good progress from their starting points during their time at the school, particularly in their self-confidence and ability to re-engage in lessons. The most able pupils attain higher level GCSE grades in English, while the least able access Entry Level 1 courses in functional literacy and numeracy skills. You continue to work hard in encouraging pupils on the wards to attend school more regularly. There have been success stories linked to pupils' improved attendance in school following the recent incentive scheme that has been introduced.
- The final key line of enquiry related to the curriculum on offer to pupils at both sites. Your approach to personalising the curriculum according to each pupil's needs has been received positively by pupils and their parents. As a result, there is an effective balance between learning and therapy for pupils who require treatment or support from health service professionals. The new assistant headteacher has introduced a greater focus upon vocational learning and the practical curriculum in the Gardener Unit. You provided good case-study evidence to support the positive impact this is having in terms of increasing pupils' engagement in learning.
- Pupils are offered incentives to engage more frequently in school life. As a result, they have opportunities to take part in off-site activities, such as fishing. There has been an increase, too, in the range of accreditation available to pupils. Pupils receive strong careers advice and guidance, with many transferring to further education placements. Some make successful moves into the world of work. There are plans to improve the longer-term monitoring of pupils who leave the school to check if they sustain the progress they have made during their time at the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they sharpen their use and analysis of the information about pupils who attend and then move on from the school so that they can identify trends over time

- they develop partnership working with local secondary schools in support of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs
- they develop the school development plan so that it becomes more focused upon the school's vision statement and less about the day-to-day operation of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jon Ashley  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, the team met with you and your deputy headteacher and conducted joint observations of lessons in the Gardener Unit and in the Junction 17 Unit. A meeting was held with the chair of the governing body and the vice chair. A meeting was held with the school's local authority school improvement partner. Meetings were conducted with two groups of health professionals on each of the two sites. Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks, folders, individual education plans, subject reports and classroom displays. They observed pupils on the school corridors and at breaktime. Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's review of its strengths and areas to develop, the school development plan and information about pupils' ability levels and progress. They also looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, including safe recruitment of staff and risk assessments. Inspectors spoke informally with some pupils, including on one of the wards, to gain their views about the school and their overall care. An inspector conducted telephone conversations with a small number of parents. Inspectors considered staff, pupil and parent questionnaire survey information, including that from the online questionnaire site.