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Mrs Kate Stevens
Headteacher
Round Oak School and Support Service
Brittain Lane
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Dear Mrs Stevens

Short inspection of Round Oak School and Support Service

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 2018 with Russell Hinton, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils are happy and make strong progress. You and your staff have created an ethos of purpose, care and dedication to pupils. This is the case throughout the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. Attendance is rising and the proportion of pupils who have very low attendance is declining.

Your leadership is imaginative and focused on making sure that pupils are well prepared for life when they leave school. As a result, for example, all the pupils who left at the end of sixth form and Year 11 in 2018 went on to appropriate education, training or employment. Your leadership team is strong, united to support pupils well. Places at the school are in high demand. You are building on the excellent reputation the school has acquired.

Since your appointment, a year ago, you have had to make some difficult staffing decisions to help implement your ambitious development plan. You and your staff give the highest priority to pupils' safety, improving their life chances and designing a curriculum that responds to their needs. Most staff have supported your strategy and vision.

You have opened the school to external reviews, for example reviews of your pupil premium impact and safeguarding arrangements. The result of this is that your planning and decisions are well informed.

You have successfully improved the areas you were asked to address at the last

inspection.

You were asked to develop the use of information about the progress of different groups and individuals. You have given effective training to staff in using the school's information-gathering system. Consequently, pupils are given support with their work which is accurate and helpful. Leaders have arranged for local schools to work with your staff to standardise and moderate the quality of assessment. As a result, assessment information is more reliable and there is effective challenge for pupils, especially in literacy. You and your staff have improved the ways in which education, health and care (EHC) plans lead to pupils' progress. The effect is that pupils, parents and carers understand the feedback they get from staff. You were also asked to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of leaders. We found that you have done this well by, for example, developing performance management. Governors are able to monitor the impact of your strategies by seeing how pupils' progress is linked to realistic and precise targets for you and your staff.

Your staff are committed to pupils' welfare. From the start of the day, at what you call 'magic breakfast', teachers and teaching assistants meet pupils as they arrive, eat with them and make sure that pupils are listened to and get into a positive frame of mind. This sets the tone for the day. Staff successfully help pupils get skilled at independent living, protective behaviours and getting along well with one another. Throughout the inspection, in every lesson and social time, we saw pupils respecting each other and staff. Pupils are polite, courteous and hard-working. The atmosphere of the school is purposeful, orderly and calm because staff are highly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour.

The governing body is a strength of the school. Governors are well trained in how to track the progress of pupils who have special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Governors scrupulously monitor leaders' arrangements for keeping pupils safe. The chair of governors visits the school often and helps leaders evaluate the success of their plans. Governors have a range of relevant experience and they use this well to help with your self-evaluation. Consequently, you, your senior team and governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Your development plan is well founded on reliable information about the school.

You use an alternative provider and you have an off-site classroom. An inspector visited both settings and found that pupils are making good progress and behaving well. At both settings, pupils' welfare is well managed because staff work closely with providers to put in place effective risk assessments and help pupils learn behaviours likely to keep them safe.

You have a support service at the school. You employ three staff to work with young people who are not on your roll and are cared for as patients at Brooklands National Health Service Hospital in Solihull. The hospital uses your service because you have a record of successful support for individuals with complex mental-health needs. This has benefits for the pupils at your school. For example, the work you do helps inform your staff how to cope effectively if they encounter highly unpredictable behaviours. You also offer services to local primary schools. These schools commission help from

your staff to assist with, for example, writing and reviewing EHC plans. These schools find your staff to be effective and benefit the learning of pupils, many of whom go on to attend your school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. For example, you have weekly meetings of your staff focused on safeguarding. These are effective because they allow you and your team to track incidents, agree actions and enhance their practice. Pupils learn how to use social media safely. Pupils told us that they feel safe. Staff are well trained in, for example, early help, identification of signs of abuse and how to help pupils who have speech and language difficulties make their needs known. You work with four other special schools in the area to learn best practice and share what you do well. You have effective systems for allowing staff to make known any concerns they have and act upon this information. We saw copious evidence of your efficient information-logging, reporting and action documents. The single central record is well maintained and regularly monitored.

You have established an ethos where staff do not delay in letting you and each other know when they have even the slightest concern about a pupil's, staff's or parent's safety. We saw evidence where you have acted promptly and effectively when concerns are brought to you. You do this in close liaison with the local authority designated officer, social services and medical care agencies. You have effective policies to protect pupils and adults. The safeguarding policy is up to date and compliant with guidance from the Secretary of State. Your complaints and whistleblowing policies are fit for purpose and you have used them effectively to investigate concerns. The local authority has confidence in your safeguarding arrangements. Governors are well trained to support you and raise questions if they have concerns.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to scrutinise pupil outcomes, particularly in English and mathematics. Inspectors found that pupils across the school are making good progress.
- We looked at pupils' workbooks in key stage 3 and could see that pupils learn with effort and pride and make good progress in subjects across the curriculum. For example, we found pupils learning how to read and spell well. Staff are skilled at building on pupils' phonics learning. This means that pupils are confident at trying new words and unfamiliar letter combinations. Pupils enjoy reading. They are willing to spend time correcting their work. As a result, pupils make good progress in literacy from their starting points.
- In key stage 4, pupils are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils enjoy their work. For example, in a lesson combining mathematics and English, pupils had written extensively about their visit to a supermarket and learned how to make successful choices when

buying goods. Pupils used mathematics skills to calculate costs, work out a budget and make estimates about the time it would take on public transport to get to the shop. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. They are entered for a wide range of high-quality accreditations, including Functional Skill, Entry Levels and BTECs. Last year, all pupils who took such qualifications made strong progress from their starting points.

- In key stage 5, pupils make good progress in English and a range of other subjects across the curriculum. In their English lessons, for example, students learn how to write accurate and well-checked emails, letters and reports. Students organised themselves well and worked in teams to plan and review work-related learning visits. Some students make less-strong progress in mathematics because they do not always see the relevance of what they learn. Consequently, leaders have well-considered plans for building mathematics into other subjects across the curriculum and to make clear links with their work-experience placements.
- Another focus for the inspection was the quality of your curriculum. We found your curriculum to be effective because you thoughtfully link the subjects pupils learn to their EHC plans. Provision for information, advice and guidance about pupils' future destinations is led very effectively by one of your assistant headteachers, who ensures that each pupil has a curriculum plan that helps your staff choose appropriate education, training or employment options.
- This year almost all pupils will complete Functional Skills courses in English, mathematics and information technology. Staff help pupils choose from a range of high-quality accreditations, including Entry Levels up to and including level 2 in BTECs, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course, science and humanities. As a result, pupils are well challenged and are motivated to succeed. You work with local colleges and employers and they have told you that your pupils have many of the skills they need to do well. For example, pupils' literacy, teamwork and independent-working skills prepared them well for their horticulture-based work experience.
- You have ensured that pupils' EHC plans are used effectively to help staff plan the curriculum. You have introduced what you call 'pupil passports'. These make clear the progress pupils have made and what their next targets should be. As a result, staff share information about pupils' work effectively. You are working to improve these further with a revised system of 'pupil passports'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff, pupils and parents understand and can use the revised 'pupil passports' so that assessment is clear and pupils continue to make at least good progress
- students in the sixth form make more effective progress in mathematics by seeing the relevance of their learning to other subjects and the next stage of their education, employment or training.

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

Yours sincerely

Graham Tyrer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors observed pupils in a range of situations, including at break and lunchtime. We held meetings with a group of pupils and talked with pupils in lessons. We visited the school's alternative provider and the off-site classroom. We conducted a scrutiny of the single central record of recruitment checks, documents and arrangements relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy. Inspectors scrutinised other policies relating to governance, pupil behaviour, attendance, complaints and whistleblowing. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the chair of governors and two other governors. We reviewed the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plan. Inspectors observed learning across the school and evaluated the quality of pupils' learning in their English, mathematics and wider curriculum books. We scrutinised pupils' education, health and care plans. Inspectors considered the 17 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 15 free-text responses from parents, 47 responses to the staff questionnaire and 53 responses to the pupil questionnaire. There were two qualifying complaints made available to inspectors and these formed part of the evidence base.