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Miss Joanna Rand
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Dear Miss Rand

Short inspection of Hall School

Following my visit to the school on 30 October 2018 with John Randall, 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 the school was judged to be good in November 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 recent appointment as headteacher, you have visited all classrooms and worked very closely with staff to form your own accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. You rightly recognise that teaching and learning continue to be good, ensuring that most pupils are making good progress. All staff have good knowledge of pupils' prior learning and use this information well in their planning and target-setting. You have rightly identified that, in a small number of classes, teaching and learning are not yet consistently good because clear classroom protocols for learning are not fully established. You have ensured that all staff continue to work strongly as a team for the benefit of all pupils and parents and carers. The work of the communications team has developed well since the last inspection and is a particular strength of the school. The team has an excellent reputation within the community for its work, and includes therapists, healthcare professionals and specialist teaching assistants who work closely with staff and parents to support pupils' communication needs. Staff morale is high and all share your drive for continuous improvement. You enjoy the confidence of parents, which was reflected in your own recent survey and in their positive responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents expressed very positive views in their Parent View free-text responses during the inspection. One parent, who represented the views of others, wrote, 'The school is amazing; my child receives brilliant care and is making fantastic progress.'

You benefit from good support from other school leaders and governors. The school

has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. As result, pupils benefit from feedback on their learning, which helps them to know how to improve. Students in the sixth form have access to more relevant vocational courses to successfully prepare them for the next stage of their lives. Leaders have also developed resources in the play areas so all pupils have full and regular access to outdoor learning.

Pupils' behaviour continues to be good. They grow in confidence and develop very positive attitudes to learning as they move through the school. Pupils show great pride in their work and achievements, which is reflected in their eagerness to participate in all activities and in their good attendance. Pupils benefit from a highly individualised curriculum with an emphasis on developing communication and independence skills. In early years, children learn through a rich variety of play experiences. As they move through the school, pupils develop their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and communication across a range of topics. Students in the sixth form are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. The curriculum also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, with good opportunities to increase their awareness of British values. Pupils eagerly participate in the opportunities for enrichment, such as local theatre trips and outdoor learning programmes.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders, staff and governors work closely with therapists, healthcare professionals, outside agencies and parents to promote a strong culture for safeguarding. You have recently reviewed all of the school's safeguarding policies to make sure that these are up to date. You have implemented these effectively to promote pupils' safety and well-being across the school, including in early years and the sixth form.

You make detailed checks on the suitability of all staff and visitors to work with children and enter these thoroughly in a single central record. Staff rigorously assess any potential risks to pupils' safety when they participate in any activities, both in school and on off-site trips. Staff maintain pupils' personal dignity during feeding, changing and medical routines. Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils feel safe in school and there is no bullying. Pupils move around the school and play safely outside. They handle equipment and resources, including computers, safely.

Inspection findings

- To demonstrate that the school continues to be good, I wanted to determine how well the curriculum was preparing pupils at key stage 4 for independence, the world of work and transition to colleges or the sixth form. This was because there was no information about these aspects on the school's website. We found that transition between Year 11 and Year 12 is seamless. Staff provide bespoke planning for work-related learning and the community within the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. This develops pupils' confidence in working within the community. Planning shows that in key stage 4, full account is

taken of the provision specified in each pupil's education, health and care plan in their transition reviews to prepare them for the next stage of their lives.

- Pupils learn how to travel independently and take part in small enterprises such as making cakes for different functions, making Christmas cards or serving in the tuck shop. This promotes their independence skills effectively and prepares them for the world of work. Pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 benefit from independent careers advice and guidance. This enables them to make a choice between college or staying on to the sixth form.
- I also wanted to find out whether all pupils across the school, including in early years and the sixth form, were making good progress over time. This was because there was no information about the progress of current pupils on the website. The school's most recent tracking information shows that most pupils are making good progress. Pupils' work and classroom displays demonstrate this progress in range of subjects such as cookery, science, art and history.
- In a few year groups, a small number of pupils are not making enough progress from their starting points because teaching and learning are not consistently good. Children in early years make good progress and settle into routines quickly because staff develop their communication and social skills well through play. Students in the sixth form make good progress in independence skills and are therefore well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Pupils' progress in communication is consistently good and often better. The communications team works effectively with staff to plan and implement individual approaches for pupils, using well-chosen resources to develop these skills. There are no significant differences in the progress of any groups of pupils in this regard.
- Your reviews of the impact of the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and Year 7 catch-up show that these pupils are making equally good progress as other pupils from their different starting points. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties are also making good progress from their lower starting points, as seen in their increasing awareness of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' during a sensory drama session.
- Finally, I wanted to find out how well the governors are monitoring the work of the school. This was because some information for parents was missing from the website and a few policies were not up to date at the time of this inspection. Governors recognise that this is an area for development. Nevertheless, minutes of governors' meetings clearly show that they are holding leaders to account for the work of the school. They ask probing questions about the consistency of teaching and learning across the school and the impact of additional spending on pupils' learning and well-being. They are regular visitors to the school, and as a result, have a realistic view of teaching and learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in the few classes where teaching is not consistently good, teachers establish clear protocols for learning to ensure that all pupils in these classes make at least good progress
- the website complies with requirements, so that parents can access full information about the work 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 Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

My colleague and I met with you, school leaders, the communications team and three members of the governing body to discuss the work of the school. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. We visited all classes with senior leaders, looked at pupils' work and spoke to them and their teachers about their learning. We considered the views of parents by looking at the outcomes of the school's most recent survey of parents and the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with nine free-text responses. We also considered the three responses to the staff questionnaire.

We looked at a range of documentation including: the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding; records of training in safeguarding and the school's vetting procedures for staff and visitors; records of behaviour incidents and any use of physical intervention; attendance figures and risk assessments; records about the progress pupils are making; minutes of governing body meetings; the school's website; and the school's summary self-evaluation and school development plan.