

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



28 November 2018

Ms Tracey Ydlibi  
Executive Headteacher  
City of Peterborough Academy, Special School  
Reeves Way  
Peterborough  
Cambridgeshire  
PE1 5LQ

Dear Ms Ydlibi

### **No formal designation inspection of City of Peterborough Academy, Special School**

Following my visit with John Craig, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 15 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about how effectively leadership and management provide for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, the inspection team held meetings with you, the head of school, other leaders with responsibility for pupils' behaviour and welfare, directors and the chief executive officer from Greenwood Academy Trust (the trust). The inspection team spoke with a representative from the local authority and a representative of the academy council.

Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of 40 parental views provided from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Pupils were spoken with both informally in class and formally as a group chosen by the inspectors.

A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's record for the suitable employment of staff. The school's improvement plan used by the trust and

school leaders was evaluated, together with their view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The inspection team visited all classes to observe pupils learning and to consider the quality of behaviour and welfare. Inspectors evaluated the school's arrangements for child protection and school records of behaviour incidents, attendance and welfare.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

leaders are taking effective action to maintain the standards of personal development and welfare identified at the school's previous inspection in September 2017.

### **Context**

City of Peterborough Academy, Special School was opened in 2012 as a free special school as part of the Greenwood Academy Trust. It caters for pupils from five to 16 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Peterborough and Cambridgeshire local authorities refer pupils to the school.

There are 114 pupils from Reception to Year 11 who are currently educated on site. All pupils have an education, health and care plan due to autism spectrum disorder. Some pupils have multiple special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are boys. Currently, nearly 50% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Around 20% of pupils speak English as an additional language.

You took on responsibility for the school in September 2017 as the executive headteacher. You are also responsible for Nethergate Academy, which is part of the trust and provides education for pupils with SEND. The head of school was appointed in September 2017. In September 2018, 14 new staff took up their posts. Leaders have increased the number of classes, with pupils taught by ability in classes usually of six or fewer pupils. Each class is taught by a qualified teacher.

### **Evidence**

You and the head of school ensure that your ethos and expectations to promote a safe and warm environment continue to develop and improve. From the moment pupils arrive in the morning, they are welcomed. Positive relationships with adults are very evident. Pupils respond well to adults and lessons start smoothly. One parent spoken with stated, 'I would give this school top marks', whilst another stated, 'The school is heading in the right direction and is improving.'

Your own evaluation of the quality of education is accurate. You have a clear understanding of what is working well and what is needed to improve further. You have well-established plans and clear priorities to continue school improvement.

Both you and the head of school regularly review and amend the curriculum, so that individuals have the opportunity to make good or better progress from their starting points. Although pupils work well in class, some still say that the work is easy. The activities teachers provide for pupils do not challenge the most able pupils as well as they could.

Pupils are happy in school. In classes, they respond well to the teacher's instructions and enjoy their learning. For example, in the sports hall, when pupils play badminton, they listen carefully to instructions. They work hard at ensuring their techniques are correct and show good humour and tenacity. In other classes, pupils who have little or no verbal communication persevere with choosing symbols to communicate their requests. In all classes, staff demonstrate enthusiasm and develop positive relationships with pupils. Staff understand pupils' specific needs and provide well for them.

You rightly continue to provide a high level of supervision when pupils use the outdoor area. You have many plans to improve the outdoor provision to provide more positive opportunities for pupils to play. During playtimes, adults interact well with pupils. Pupils return to classes sensibly and well. Routines are well established, and pupils follow them willingly.

Generally, pupils attend school well. Staff make sure that where a pupil is absent checks are made quickly to determine where they are. You have effective induction procedures so pupils who are new to the school settle in swiftly and well. Staff keep thorough information about attendance and relevant processes and procedures are firmly established.

Over this year, you have increased the training staff receive to safeguard pupils. All staff have received the most current safeguarding training, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty against radicalisation. Leaders have ensured that there are secure processes and procedures for staff to record any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare. Staff who are responsible for child protection do not hesitate to refer concerns to relevant agencies when needed. Your new system for logging these concerns is proving effective and staff are diligently using the new approach. Safeguarding arrangements for the recruitment and vetting of staff meet requirements.

Similarly, you have trained staff in a different system for the use of reasonable physical restraint. Staff spoken with know what to do and appreciate the consistent upgrading of training they receive. One new member of staff to the school stated, 'I have had a great deal of training in my first term here, more than I can remember from previously.' Staff are diligent in logging behaviour incidents or where they have been required to use physical restraint. Currently, this system is new; you and other leaders have not yet analysed the information these records provide to plan future actions or to refine the systems further.

You recognise that this year has been one of significant change. You have introduced new systems and processes and taken a robust approach to ensuring all pupils are well cared for and make good progress. These changes have resulted in an unsettled period, especially for parents. The responses on Parent View were mixed, with just over 50% stating that they would recommend the school. Inspectors could not find evidence to substantiate parental concerns or worries about the welfare of pupils.

However, you and the trust acknowledge that communication and involving parents positively continues to be an area to improve. You have some way to go to restore a small number of parents' full confidence in the school. In this, you and other school leaders are effectively supported by the work of the advisory council. Where you have actively involved parents, this has been effective. For example, parents have recently been consulted about changing the name of the school. This has been received positively and the name change is due to happen in January 2019.

The corridors around the school lack the warmth and welcoming atmosphere that is found in the classrooms and provided so readily from staff. You are fully aware of this issue and are considering ways to provide more opportunities to celebrate pupils' learning and achievements through displays around the school. You communicate a strong ethos and desire for pupils with SEND to achieve and for their work to be appropriately celebrated.

### **External support**

The trust is working closely with the local authority; both continue to carry out joint visits to the school to check on the safety and welfare of pupils. This is in response to some parental concerns received by the local authority. From their visits, local authority representatives have not been able to find evidence to substantiate parental concerns.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that new systems are firmly established and lead to further improvements in pupils' personal and academic progress.
- Continue to improve communication and engagement with parents so even more of them understand and support the positive work of the school.
- Provide more opportunities for the most able pupils to excel.
- Provide more opportunities for the work of pupils to be celebrated around the school, so pupils' achievements are evident.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Peterborough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**