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26 November 2018

Mrs Adrienne Wright
Headteacher
Hatton School and Special Needs Centre
Roding Lane South
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Dear Mrs Wright

Short inspection of Hatton School and Special Needs Centre

Following my visit to the school on 6 November 2018 with Barney Geen, 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 outstanding in February 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

You and the leadership team have maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and other leaders are new to post since the previous inspection. However, you have all held other responsibilities within the school prior to your present roles. High expectations, clear vision and strong leadership are demonstrated by the senior team.

The school provides for pupils with a range of complex needs, and the number of pupils on the roll has increased since the previous inspection. This has presented some challenges around accommodation, but you have worked very well with your staff to overcome them.

You have implemented a new leadership framework which is working well to support staff so that they use consistent approaches across the school. This is clearly evident through the quality of displays in the classroom and through the approaches used in lessons. Staff receive regular training and support, and middle leaders have developed into their roles effectively.

The school is highly committed to working with parents and carers to ensure that pupils' learning takes place both in and out of the school. However, some parents expressed concern at the lack of therapy support, although this is not a provision the school has direct responsibility for. You are proud of the support your outreach team provides to other schools in the local authority and you work effectively with other agencies.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding practice across the school is effective. A strong culture of safeguarding is evident throughout the school. Leaders, staff and governors ensure that all safeguarding checks are completed and that staff receive training to ensure they remain up to date with their safeguarding knowledge. Across the school, staff maintain a calm atmosphere which supports the pupils so that they feel safe. Parents who we spoke to and those who completed the questionnaire said that they believe their children are safe at the school.

Leaders are very aware that the pupils attending the school are particularly vulnerable. They act quickly and appropriately when safeguarding concerns arise. They follow up referrals by checking the actions of other agencies to ensure that there are no delays in keeping pupils safe.

The school's approach to behaviour management supports safeguarding. For example, the school organises lunchtimes in a way that minimises any impact on behaviour due to difficulties with space. You and other leaders have a systematic approach to training staff in managing and recording any challenging behaviour. The school is effective in the way it manages pupils' behaviour and this makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on how effectively leaders are taking action to secure improved attendance for pupils, including for those with persistent absence. This was because attendance for the school falls below the national average.
- The school has thorough procedures for contacting parents on the first day of absence when pupils are not in school and following up where appropriate. You and your leadership team work well with other agencies to address any issues relating to persistent absentees.
- You also explain clearly to parents how important attendance is for a pupil's education. You use financial penalties in exceptional circumstances.
- The school's approach to tackling attendance concerns ensures that pupils have the best possible access to learning opportunities, which impacts on their achievement.
- We also looked to see to what extent leaders ensure that the curriculum is helping pupils to achieve well, taking into account their different needs and abilities. We particularly focused on the support provided to pupils through approaches to communication, as this was an area identified in the previous inspection report.
- Inspectors found that staff use consistent and effective approaches to communication which support pupils to engage with the curriculum, access learning and achieve well.

- The school offers a varied curriculum, seen through documentation, observation in lessons and pupils' books. This curriculum enables pupils to achieve well in academic subjects and develop wider skills and knowledge.
- You and other leaders have put in place systematic procedures to planning which translate the curriculum into practice. This is evident through the consistent approach to teaching we observed.
- New teachers are mentored and supported to engage fully with the school's approach to curriculum planning and delivery.
- Teachers make sure that pupils have a wide range of exciting learning opportunities. These are usually matched exceptionally well to the next steps in their development. However, on a few occasions, some of the work is not matched as well as it could be to pupils' needs.
- A further area we looked at was how robust the school's processes and procedures are for assessing and checking on pupils' progress. We chose to focus on this area, as the school has recently implemented new systems.
- We found thorough processes in place for recording, assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and for reporting it to parents. These processes are used consistently across the school.
- The school keeps a close check on pupils' academic and personal progress towards both academic targets and targets related to pupils' education, health and care plans. Leaders ensure that the resulting assessment information is used to inform interventions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers consistently set work that provides the right level of challenge, drawing on the advice of all professionals.

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

Yours sincerely

Penny Barratt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. We carried out joint visits to classrooms with you and deputy headteacher. We undertook scrutinies of the school's curriculum and assessment procedures. We conducted a review of the school's analysis of attendance information. We reviewed responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for parents, staff and pupils. We carried out a scrutiny of documents, including the school's development plan, safeguarding information and records, data on pupils' achievement and attendance, the single central record and safeguarding files.