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17 May 2019

Ms Heidi Dennison and Mr Simon Knight  
Joint Headteachers  
Frank Wise School  
Hornbeam Close  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX16 9RL

Dear Ms Dennison and Mr Knight

### **Short inspection of Frank Wise School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2019 with Ross MacDonald, 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 Frank Wise School was judged to be outstanding in March 2015.

### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You both lead the school with a clear determination to ensure that all pupils fully engage in learning and make very strong progress from their starting points. You are supported ably by your senior and extended leadership team, whose members share both your vision and care for the pupils. Teachers and support staff hold the same very high expectations, that all pupils should achieve of their best. All of the staff who offered a view said that they were proud to be a member of staff and that they enjoy their work. As a result of your firm commitment and strong leadership, pupils receive exceptional levels of support and thrive at Frank Wise School.

Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school. They said that staff support them well by setting work that is tailored to their particular needs. One pupil remarked, 'I like the teachers. They help me to learn.' At the start of the day, pupils join their classes quickly and are ready to learn from the outset. The routines and values you have established are respected by all, resulting in exemplary behaviour throughout the school. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They feel that it is extremely well led. One parent stated, 'The passion, commitment, knowledge and love that the staff show, not only to its pupils but also parents/carers, is inspiring.'

Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the area identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Links with other schools and providers are strong and collaborative work is part of every day school life. In addition, there is a concerted effort to help pupils and their families work with the wider community, particularly in the sixth form.

Across all facets of the school, pupils are achieving very well. The curriculum is inspiring, inclusive and imaginative, and teaching is typically highly effective. Lessons are meticulously planned to ensure that pupils can access learning at an appropriate level for them. Relationships between everyone in the school community are strong, resulting in a team ethic that involves the whole school community, regardless of specific needs or background. The effective use of support staff is exemplary, as they consistently help pupils to achieve their goals. There is a strong focus on understanding the specific needs of individuals. It permeates throughout the school, creating a calm, reflective and understanding ethos. Successes of all kinds are celebrated.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record details accurately the robust pre-employment and background checks carried out on staff and other adults before they are engaged to work in the school. Adults are trained appropriately in all areas of safeguarding and know what actions to take to keep pupils safe from harm.

The designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding team work effectively with other agencies to make sure that pupils are safe. Staff maintain useful relationships with a range of other professionals to support highly vulnerable pupils. You proactively seek advice from expert sources whenever you identify opportunities to build on your already effective practice. You and your staff show the strongest possible commitment to ensuring pupils' well-being. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They know who to speak to if they have a concern.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we looked at leaders' actions to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are effective, including attendance. We also considered how effectively leaders work with other professional bodies and the community, including parents and carers, to ensure that all pupils make strong progress from their starting points. We evaluated how well the governing body holds leaders to account in order to ensure the continuing success of the school.
- Leaders are diligent in ensuring that all pupils are safe. A rigorous assessment of each individual pupil's needs is carried out and reviewed frequently, resulting in the implementation of highly effective plans. These plans are skilfully tailored to maximise pupils' progress, both pastorally and academically. Key staff challenge absence, and have high expectations of pupils' regular attendance. Monitoring routines are robust. When pupils do not attend school, staff work determinedly to

find out why they are absent and to establish where they are. Pupils respond well to this high level of care.

- You have designed a curriculum that focuses directly on pupils' learning needs, and which has transformed learning. For example, in a lesson observed by an inspector, pupils used a wide variety of activities and resources to develop their skills, particularly in communication. They took part with enjoyment and confidence. In addition, staff at all levels are taking an increasingly important role in developing and refining both what is taught and how the curriculum is delivered.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used effectively to remove the barriers to learning for pupils who are disadvantaged. Leaders robustly assess the effectiveness of their plans and review them frequently. When required, they take swift and appropriate action to ensure that all specific funds are used to maximum effect. Because of this, progress is strong.
- You have a strong, passionate and committed governing body. Governors bring a range of skills to the strategic leadership of the school. Their wider knowledge and expertise have enabled you to improve accountability at all levels and have helped to raise standards. Governors have made bold decisions to continue the development of the school, for example the appointment of joint head teachers. This has been highly effective in growing the capacity of the leadership team to ensure the individualised curriculum continues to thrive.
- Members of the governing body are rigorous in their pursuit of high standards. They challenge leaders during scheduled meetings and visit the school regularly to check the validity of leaders' reports. Like senior leaders, governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and are keen to search for methods of improvement. They appreciate the excellent work of staff and are keen to support you with the school's next steps.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop the high-quality curriculum by exploring methods to support strong progress, particularly outside of usual school hours.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Tostevin  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

The inspection team observed teaching and learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in all phases. All observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. We held meetings with you, senior leaders, teachers and support staff, as well as with the chair of the governing body and three governors.

We scrutinised a range of documents, including: leaders' evaluations of the school's performance; minutes of the governing body's meetings; policies; safeguarding records; records of pupils' attendance and behaviour; and information about pupils' progress. We also scrutinised the school's website. We spoke to pupils during the day. We considered the views of staff, and took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 13 free-text comments.