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Mr P Scotting
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Scotting

Short inspection of Stone Hill School

Following my visit to the school on 11 June 2019 with Berni Moorcroft, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Through clear and focused development, you, your senior leadership team and the governors ensure that the school maintains, and further develops, the high standards of education and well-being that you set.

A wide and varied curriculum offer engages and meets the differing needs of pupils exceptionally well. You have provided a very calm, nurturing environment which allows your pupils to settle quickly into learning.

Improvements suggested in the previous inspection report have been addressed very well. Pupils, in all groups, are set challenging targets which are reviewed and monitored regularly to enable greater achievements. This was seen particularly in English and mathematics, where over 80% of pupils are achieving or exceeding the targets they have been set.

You ensure that there is a strong culture of tolerance and respect evident throughout the school. Staff at all levels show a high level of respect and this is mirrored in pupils' impeccable behaviour towards each other, staff and visitors.

Attendance is consistently high. You have ensured that focused intervention is carried out for the small number of pupils who are regularly absent. Pupils are very happy to be in school and this is reflected in the smooth transition from home to school in the morning.

The highly positive and strong teacher-pupil relationships and the well-developed skills of the staff frequently prevent behavioural difficulties from arising. Staff use deep knowledge of each pupil along with skills such as humour to defuse potentially difficult situations and ensure that learning is not disrupted. Any incidents of negative behaviour are recorded and monitored and the information used well to inform future planning for the pupil.

You and your senior leadership team have high expectations for your pupils and staff. High aspirations are evident throughout the teaching, support and progression of the pupils. Personalised learning is apparent and rapid and sustained progress from individual starting points is clear.

The staff hold you and each other in very high regard. They are extremely proud to work at the school and especially value the training and development opportunities they receive. Newly appointed senior and middle leaders, in particular, are committed and passionate about the opportunities they have been given.

Members of the governing body are a very strong team, who are clearly and passionately committed to the school and its pupils. They are clear about the current strengths and complications that face the leadership team. They have the knowledge and skills both to challenge the school very effectively and to support bringing about even further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established an extremely strong, effective safeguarding culture in school, creating a very safe and secure environment for pupils and staff. Safeguarding arrangements are strong and fit for purpose.

Designated safeguarding leads are highly knowledgeable, in relation to both safeguarding practice and the needs of the pupils. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding has experience in this field, providing effective challenge to leaders and undertaking checks of school systems and procedures.

The wider staff team has a strong working knowledge of safeguarding procedures and understands the risks to pupils. Staff are highly vigilant in identifying signs of neglect and other forms of abuse and they know how to report any form of allegation. Very positive relationships are built with parents and carers, which enables swift referral to early help services if required.

You ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Through the wider curriculum, assemblies, displays and targeted intervention work, pupils are encouraged and supported to keep themselves safe, both in the real world and online. Parents are also encouraged and supported to ensure that they have all the information necessary to support their child to stay safe.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on checking whether the quality of teaching and learning remained outstanding. A high level of personalised planning, skilfully planned group activities and high aspirations ensure that the quality of teaching and learning remains very strong. Throughout the school, pupils were actively engaged with their learning both with an adult and through independent work.
- Reading is woven skilfully through the curriculum. A high level of accessible reading resources is available to all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to read, at a level that matches their comprehension, and to read widely both for pleasure and as part of their lessons. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in English and in the wider curriculum, such as in religious education, where pupils were heard reading out loud about Islam.
- Clear and effective systems are in place to assess pupils' progress from their individual starting points. Targets from pupils' education, health and care plans are used alongside academic targets to develop a holistic picture of the progress made by each pupil. Pupils who are in need of further support, intervention and development in order to achieve their full potential are quickly identified. This has had a positive impact on the progress of individual pupils, successfully narrowing any gaps in achievement to that of their peers.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment very carefully. They know that the high quality of teaching and learning seen within the school in English and mathematics is not consistently replicated across all other subjects and year groups. Although actions to address this are already underway, further work is needed to ensure that pupils' outcomes are equally high across subjects.
- A further focus on this inspection was pupils' transition through the school and onto post-16 education, employment or training. Transition is a strength of the school. Pupils speak excitedly about the move from lower to upper school and enjoy the opportunities they receive as they progress through the school to improve their life skills.
- Transition to adulthood is woven across all years, with pupils encouraged to raise their aspirations around going to college and taking up employment. Travel training and work experience in key stage 4 supports pupils to gain the skills necessary to move on successfully at the end of Year 11. At the end of the last academic year, every pupil who left the school had secured a college place.
- Leaders work in close partnership with the local college to ensure that the opportunities for pupils to progress are wide and varied. Further plans are in development to increase the number of post-16 providers who have an offer appropriate to the skills and needs of Stone Hill pupils.
- Leaders and governors have created a broad and balanced curriculum, which offers a range of qualifications for pupils of all abilities. The diverse curriculum and the focus on the core skills of English and mathematics contribute well to pupils' outcomes. Pupils engage with the array of subjects and opportunities available to them, which include classroom-based learning, working with tools in design and technology, using kitchen equipment in food technology and external

trips and visits linked to the curriculum.

- Pupils' social and emotional well-being benefits from the wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include the Duke of Edinburgh Award, football club, iPad club and The Star Centre. Clubs support pupils' social development through team activities and fun.
- Parents are pleased with the school and the progress that their children are making. You have continued to develop and strengthen relationships with parents and wider families and this is clear in the Parent View feedback. One parent commented, 'Our child has made amazing progress since moving here and this school is a great example of how children can achieve great things as long as they have the right resources and appropriate support.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the high quality of teaching and learning seen within the school is consistently replicated across all subjects and year groups, to ensure that outcomes remain high for all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Tricia Stevens
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, senior leaders and middle leaders. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, governors and the school improvement partner. Inspectors observed pupils arriving at school, in lessons and during break and lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, responses to Ofsted's questionnaire to parents (Parent View) and staff surveys. They also reviewed the school's records of checks made on the suitability of adults to work with pupils.