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29 January 2019

Mrs Marie Gentles
Headteacher
Hawkswood Primary PRU
Antlers Hill
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Dear Mrs Gentles

Short inspection of Hawkswood Primary PRU

Following my visit to the school on 15 January 2019 with Karen Matthews, 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 June 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 are rightly proud of your work around pupils' well-being, and in ensuring that pupils are ready for learning. This has enabled you to establish a calm and purposeful learning environment for pupils despite previous negative experiences of education. Your determined leadership has had a massive impact on the attitudes of, and subsequent opportunities for, your pupils. You have given life chances that would otherwise not be there. You and your staff know each and every pupil exceptionally well and are uncompromising in seeking the absolute best. Consequently, the pupils value the education that they receive. One parent I spoke to told me that the school provides, 'the best experience ever for all our children'.

Despite challenging circumstances, attendance for most pupils is significantly improved from their attendance at their previous schools. This is because you have strengthened systems around tracking absence and you apply them consistently.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and they report a sense of pride and belonging. They feel that they have the support of school leaders and that the school is well managed. Relationships between staff members are strong, and they provide effective support for one another, particularly around dealing with challenging behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff vetting and checking systems are completed thoroughly. Staff training is comprehensive, and responds well to local risks and individual pupil's needs. Consequently, staff are skilled in keeping pupils safe, even when behaviour is challenging.

Staff develop very positive and trusting relationships with pupils based on mutual respect and understanding. You work closely with parents, carers and other professionals, including the local police and social care. This is to ensure that your most vulnerable pupils and their families receive a coordinated package of support to help them keep safe. The daily briefing meeting provides all staff with the opportunity to reflect on practice. It ensures that everyone is fully informed and prepared for the day.

Pupils themselves are clear about what to do if they have worries. This is because they have access to information that is clear and concise. They have their own safeguarding leaflet to refer to, which lists school and outside agency support.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. This inspection focused on the impact of leaders' actions, particularly your work to build capacity across mainstream partners. I also looked at how leaders address behavioural and emotional issues to ensure that the pupils make the most of their time with you. Next, I considered how well the curriculum prepares pupils for life outside of school. Lastly, I also looked at how leaders use assessment information to ensure that pupils make strong progress.
- You have earned the respect of local schools because almost all of your pupils successfully reintegrate back into mainstream. This is even true of hard to place pupils who have had previous negative experiences in multiple settings. However, you recognise that some of your pupils, with the right support, need not have come to you in the first place. In response, you are working with local mainstream schools to develop strategies that would allow more pupils to succeed in their setting.
- Your work on pupil behaviour is a major strength of the school. Potential incidents are often avoided because staff skilfully calm pupils and guide them back to their learning. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and are able to pick up on even the smallest clues to help avoid problems even before they happen. Pupils know that the staff care about them and provide them with the time, space and skills to deal with issues. Pupils are taught to resolve conflicts, tolerate the views of others, and to have a more positive attitude. Parents are pleased with the school's approach to behaviour, and one parent told me that their child 'wouldn't have coped' without staff's understanding. Another said that the school has 'made my son respectable'.

- Pupils are almost always happy and relaxed, and they see the school as a safe and friendly haven. Pupils understand the need to manage their own behaviour, and they are able to reflect on the choices they make. This is because boundaries are consistently applied and expectations are very high. Senior leaders and staff provide very strong role models for the pupils in their empathetic approach in dealing with pupils who are becoming discouraged or anxious. The pupils we spoke to demonstrated mature attitudes and an understanding of the importance of self-regulation. Staff see beyond the behaviours, and they do not take things personally, focusing instead on the learning and on supporting one another through open and honest communication. The staff I spoke to feel well supported by leaders. One told me that 'we are never on our own'. Information you collect on behaviour incidents is comprehensive and is analysed effectively to target support.
- You and your staff have designed a curriculum that is broad, balanced and effectively equips pupils to thrive when they return to the mainstream. It successfully fills gaps to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged. Consequently, reintegration is largely successful, and this is carefully monitored. One member of staff told me that this was also because 'we embrace mainstream practice'. The curriculum aims to create a personalised learning experience for all pupils regardless of starting points. Pupils are presented with a range of real-life situations that enable them to transfer and consolidate the skills that they need to thrive in the outside world. Pupils feel that they have access to opportunities that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, a recent visit to a care home was successful in promoting relationships and empathy.
- The curriculum is wisely tailored to address some of the challenges that your pupils face beyond school, such as gang affiliation. Consequently, pupils around the school show respect to one another, to staff and to their surroundings. A strong emphasis is placed on building pupils' self-confidence in order to increase their levels of motivation and engagement with learning. Pupils are increasingly able to see challenge as an opportunity, and they are able to move beyond their comfort zone.
- The process of staff getting to know pupils' needs and abilities when they arrive is a strength of the school. Information collected on entry enables teachers to skilfully plan interesting activities that challenge and motivate pupils to achieve well. Last year, 40% of pupils achieved above the national expected standard in reading, and 60% in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is despite the fact that many pupils who start with you are two years below age-related expectations. Pupils often enter your school with no writing skills, but leave being able to write at length. This is because over the past two years you have had a substantial push on literacy, carefully choosing texts that engage, improving the school library, and developing staff skills. Feedback on learning is now more constructive and assists pupils in understanding how to improve. We saw this in workbooks where progress from lesson to lesson was evident, even for those who had not been with you very long.
- Leaders are confident that pupils are challenged to make sufficient progress because of rigorous quality assurance and moderation with schools across the

group. This includes not just looking at work books, but also opportunities for staff to observe learning in other school settings.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- you work more closely with local mainstream schools to create a network of local providers that responds to current and predicted needs, and maintains successful reintegration.

I am copying this letter to the chair of governors and the director of children's services for London Borough of Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Francis Gonzalez
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, the inspection team held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. You accompanied the team inspector on a series of short visits to 11 lessons. The inspection team held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, the curriculum, removing barriers to learning and measuring pupils' progress. Meetings were held with the chair of governors, staff and a group of pupils. We also spoke to three parents. The inspection team worked with senior leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and assessment information on pupils' progress. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's own evaluation, attendance data, records of pupils' progress and behaviour and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including six responses from staff and 18 pupils' responses. There were no responses to the parent questionnaire.