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Mrs Kirsty Rogers
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Dear Mrs Rogers

Short inspection of Kettlebrook Short Stay School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 2018 with Derek Barnes, 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 good in December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have addressed the areas identified for improvement, with positive results. For instance, you have worked with members of the district inclusion partnership and the local authority to strengthen the quality of information made available about pupils who require a change of placement. The improved information has enabled you and senior leaders to put into place a smooth transition for new pupils, which is well matched to their needs and abilities.

Since the last inspection you have ensured that the teaching of literacy across the curriculum has been well promoted. Pupils' independent work in books reflects a strong development of their literacy skills. Your staff promote good use of vocabulary in lessons, which is also reflected in pupils' work over time.

You have ensured that strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils that exist permeate all aspects of the school's work. You all understand that the vast majority of pupils who attend Kettlebrook Short Stay School may have had less than positive experiences in other settings. From the moment pupils arrive at school, staff are on hand to greet them warmly. They offer a listening ear and respond swiftly to any worries pupils may have. Staff discreetly but firmly reinforce the school rules of handing in mobile phones and cigarettes. Consequently, pupils are better prepared to settle down to their learning.

Pupils value the support they receive in school to help them deal with difficulties which caused them to leave their previous schools. Comments from pupils such as, 'I've now made friends' and, 'It's more chilled here, but you get your work done' typified their feelings of how well they are supported at school. The 'good stuff' display board enables staff to keep a daily record of the positive achievements of pupils. You make sure that these are collated and shared with pupils at the end of every term, to celebrate achievements in their social and emotional development.

You have also ensured that staff are well supported in their work. Staff unanimously agree that they enjoy working at Kettlebrook Short Stay School and feel that you and other leaders are very considerate of their well-being. The mindfulness session for staff that was taking place on the day of the inspection demonstrates that you take staff's well-being seriously.

Information from the school's recent survey of parents' views, along with the small number of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, demonstrate that parents and carers appreciate the support their children receive from you and your staff. Parents value the caring and compassionate support their children receive and see the improvements being made.

In April 2018, the school joined Burton Pupil Referral Unit in a new federation to serve the area of East Staffordshire. You are now the executive headteacher for both Kettlebrook Short Stay School and Burton Pupil Referral Unit. A strengthened, single management committee oversees this new federation.

Leaders' and governors' evaluations of the school's current performance are accurate. However, priorities for further improvement are not clearly articulated in the school's development planning documents. As a result, governors are not able to check on the progress you and your staff are making in these priority areas.

Governors have a good understanding of the challenges of a short-stay provision and, based on the information they are given, are able to hold you and other leaders to account. However, they are too reliant on information provided by you rather than ensuring that there is additional rigorous external scrutiny, for example to verify judgements about teaching and learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

All school procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust, well understood and followed by all staff. Staff receive frequent safeguarding briefings, as well as annual training. You also invite leaders of alternative provision to attend additional training events to enhance their understanding of risks to pupils. The safeguarding systems that are in place enable the designated safeguarding leader (DSL) to have a clear oversight of concerns. As a result, these are acted on swiftly.

You, the DSL and your staff know very well the potential safeguarding risks to which your pupils may be exposed, particularly in the local area. The DSL works tenaciously with the police, ensuring that any local intelligence is shared with them

so that safeguarding risks can be minimised.

Relationships with external agencies further enhance the support that the school provides to keep pupils safe. For example, an external agency provides drop-in support for pupils relating to substance misuse. Very recently, the school's local police community support officer led an assembly about the dangers of knife crime. Work of external agencies also complements the school's personal, social and health education curriculum, which has a strong emphasis on all aspects of safeguarding, including online safety.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching has been sustained since the last inspection. Pupils are achieving good outcomes in relation to their starting points. In 2018, nearly 40% of pupils in Year 11 achieved five GCSEs, or equivalent qualifications, including both English and mathematics. Most pupils in other year groups are making strong progress in their learning. On entry to the school, pupils are set targets relating to their prior attainment, which are then reviewed every half term. Leaders are not prepared to compromise on their high expectations of the pupils and, as a result of the review, targets may be raised but never lowered.
- Pupils are engaging in their learning because teachers make sure that lessons are planned according to pupils' needs, interests, abilities and future aspirations. During the inspection, for example, inspectors observed staff skilfully developing pupils' mathematical reasoning by making links with the pupils' interests in engineering and business.
- Staff support pupils well in learning how to manage their behaviour. Expectations for good behaviour are clearly articulated, and staff usually diffuse any inappropriate behaviour well. Leaders have recently revised their approach to managing pupils' behaviour. They have introduced 'positive behaviour support plans', which provide detailed and helpful guidance for staff in recognising the potential triggers for pupils' unsuitable behaviour. Leaders have ensured that pupils have been involved in developing their plans. Staff told inspectors that they value these plans, which help them to manage pupils' behaviour more consistently. Although the new plans have only recently been implemented, analysis of information shows that they are having a positive impact in reducing incidents over time.
- Leaders and staff take time to listen to pupils' views. Pupils recently contributed ideas about how behaviour could be improved in school; for example, by introducing a 'tea and toast' session at breaktime. As a result, this session, organised and led by pupils, provides a positive social occasion for pupils. During this session, pupils to whom the inspectors spoke reflected positively on the support they receive from the school for their emotional health and well-being.
- All staff are trained in the use of physical interventions, and they record their use accurately. The agreed philosophy that physical interventions should only be used as a last resort is reflected in the relatively infrequent and declining use of interventions. Staff ensure that pupils receive support after any incident to reflect on what went wrong and why. Where relevant, staff use this information to

provide pupils with additional support from external agencies.

- The number of exclusions was high last year but is now reducing. Leaders record all exclusions accurately. Internal exclusion is not used within the school. Pupils value the refined reward system and this is reflected in the overall reduction of behaviour incidents and exclusions.
- The school uses a small number of alternative provisions for pupils to engage in courses suited to their needs, which the school cannot offer on site. Leaders have ensured that rigorous checks and working agreements are in place before pupils begin their courses. Staff check pupils' attendance daily to make sure that pupils are where they should be, and procedures for sharing safeguarding concerns are understood. Leaders make sure that they receive regular half-termly updates on the progress pupils are making in the alternative provision. Leaders are clear that they will only use alternative provision if it provides a meaningful vocational or academic learning experience for the pupils.
- While attendance remains low, it is improving. One of the reasons for this is leaders' and governors' high aspirations for attendance, setting a target of 95%. Poor attendance is not excused, but at the same time staff are sensitive to individual pupils' circumstances. Because staff know pupils well, additional support can sometimes be put in place which can improve pupils' attendance. Leaders have recently focused on improving the attendance of some pupils who frequently arrive late to school by engaging more with their families. As a result, the punctuality and attendance of some of these pupils have improved.
- Staff make timely checks on any pupil who does not arrive at school when they should, ensuring that they are safe. If staff have any concerns about pupils' welfare, they will quickly inform the DSL, who in turn will inform other agencies as necessary.
- Leaders ensure that, unless there are specific medical reasons, all pupils have a full-time curriculum entitlement. Leaders expect pupils to attend school on a full-time basis. A very small number of pupils are currently placed on part-time timetables, but these are reviewed and adjusted on a weekly basis.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's self-evaluation and subsequent development plan are clearly aligned
- the development plan states specific success criteria, with suitable milestones, enabling governors to check the progress being made towards the outcomes
- pupils' attendance continues to improve
- aspects of the school's performance, for example the quality of teaching and learning, are subject to wider external scrutiny.

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

Yours sincerely

Deb Jenkins
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, other members of the leadership team and the school staff. We met with three members of the management committee, including the chair of the committee.

We visited lessons in different year groups and looked at pupils' work in their books and on display. We talked with pupils in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime.

We visited Bancroft, the school's temporary, additional off-site provision and spoke, by telephone, to the manager of one of the alternative provisions used by the school.

We followed several key lines of enquiry during our visit. These included: the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes; pupils' behaviour and the use of exclusions; safeguarding; and attendance.

We considered the small number of free-text responses on Parent View, and the 15 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. We looked at a variety of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, assessment information, policies, safeguarding information, minutes of management committee meetings and external reports. We also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe.