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Mrs Emily Massey
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Massey

Short inspection of Fosse Way School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 2017 with Hester Millsop, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders' clear and precise understanding of the strengths and next steps for the school is used exceptionally well to maintain the highest quality of education at the school. Teamwork is very strong. Relentless efforts by staff to look for creative solutions ensure that every pupil is able to thrive.

Expectations for pupils' achievements are very high. The real commitment to ensure that pupils build not just their academic skills also develops their confidence and independence so that they can go on to lead fulfilling lives.

Determination is a typical characteristic of staff, who are committed to finding every possible route in order to secure pupils' aspirations. Pupils are excited about the opportunities they are given while at school and have high expectations for their futures. They talk of jobs in computer programming, the air force or working as chefs. As an astute pupil said: 'They notice our struggles and give us the help we need.'

A real strength of the school is the outward-looking approach and the partnerships that are formed with other schools and business providers. Both the school and the residential setting have strong features of outstanding practice that are worthy of sharing between both settings. Residential students perform better academically and attend school more regularly that their non-resident peers but do not receive

sufficient guidance on sexual relationships, internet safety and health education. These aspects are delivered very effectively in the school. Both strengths could be more effectively shared between settings so the very best practice is spread more widely and staff can learn from each other.

Leaders' ambitions are typified in the way they plan innovative programmes to further students' ambitions. For example, students benefit from a one-year course in their final year of education which enables them to spend the year on-site at Royal United Hospital in Bath. Students learn skills in an equipped classroom at the site and benefit from support given by job coaches and careers guidance specialists. This innovative project has great success in providing students with a good chance of going on to paid employment, and many students do so.

Leaders ensure that pupils who are able to study GCSE courses do so. Specialist provision at Norton Hill School is used effectively to allow pupils access to full-time mainstream education where GCSEs and A-level courses can be studied. Pupils benefit from this provision and many have gained up to eight GCSEs; some have gone onto universities following their successes.

Pupils value the educational and training experiences provided by the on-site Longfellow's café where they develop skills in customer services, cake-making and serving customers. Work experience in the café supports pupils' study of courses such as BTEC National Diploma in hospitality. Such experiences also help pupils to gain employment in the catering industry or to go onto college placements in this area.

With these exciting opportunities well-established, the school is a positive and purposeful place. Teachers and support staff understand the education, health and care needs of pupils very well. As a result, learning is meaningful and relevant. However, on occasions some aspects of pupils' sexual relationship, internet safety and health education are not followed up routinely for residential pupils by leaders. Successful adaptations of the curriculum help pupils to stay focused on their tasks and as a result, pupils make good and often outstanding progress.

Staff use a wide variety of communication tools and strategies so that pupils are guided and supported to do well. More frequent use of signing and symbols to support better communication was an area for improvement from the previous inspection. This is now firmly embedded in everyday practice across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The designated lead is supported by the deputy leads for safeguarding; they attend a wide range of training events and meetings to ensure that they are kept well up to date with the latest safeguarding guidance. This includes ensuring that staff are vigilant and know the possible signs of abuse or concern, including understanding signs of child sexual exploitation. Where incidents of restraint occur, lessons are taken seriously and acted upon, such as conducting de-briefing

discussions with staff.

The governor who has responsibility for safeguarding is also well informed and ensures that she talks with staff about safeguarding processes and further improvements are made. Leaders keep safeguarding as the highest priority by making time during meetings for staff discussion and ensuring that lessons are learned from any serious incidents. Staff liaise with a wide range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils have the support and care they need.

A small number of parents choose to take pupils out of school during term time to attend events and some pupils have medical conditions that mean they are not able to have strong attendance at school. Staff work closely with families to ensure that they have the support they need to secure pupils' welfare and safety.

Inspection findings

- We looked at how leaders work together and the impact their actions have on outcomes for pupils. The school works closely with others in the trust and leaders ensure that good practice is shared. Roles and responsibilities are clear at all levels across the school. Among leaders, communication is very strong and there is a consistent sense of purpose. Decisions about priorities are arrived at methodically and, as a result, the school continues to improve.
- The executive headteacher is new to post but has worked at the school before and knows the school very well. Governors also know the school very well and are rigorous in their approach. They demand a wide range of information from leaders about the progress that pupils make, including disadvantaged pupils. They are passionate about the work of the school and hold leaders firmly to account for any weaknesses they find.
- Governors make concerted efforts to ensure that they listen to parents' views. Parents who spoke to inspectors were extremely positive about how well the school supports their children and the progress they make. A very small number who expressed their views on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, felt that more could be done to improve communication with parents, particularly when there are changes in staff. Some felt that they did not have enough information about behaviour and attendance.
- We also looked at the curriculum provided by the school and how it is adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. Pupils' education, health and care needs are carefully assessed. Leaders check that outcomes agreed at review meetings are transferred through to clear targets that teachers and other staff then use to plan the curriculum for each child. Staff can talk precisely about the next steps for each pupil.
- Solutions are found to help overcome barriers to learning. For example, music, art, quiet times or physical times are carefully put in place to help pupils to make the most of their activities. Teachers plan fun, inspiring learning activities. For example, in science pupils were carrying out investigations into changes that occur when items are burned.

- Older pupils have access to enriching real-work experiences that helps to ensure that no pupil leaves Fosse Way School without employment, education or training to move onto next.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- parents receive more frequent information, particularly about behaviour and attendance
- staff work together in the school and residential setting to share and learn from the very best practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with senior leaders, inspectors looked at learning across year groups at the main site and at the other two sites, Norton Hill School and The Royal United Hospital, Bath. Inspectors talked to pupils and looked in their workbooks. A meeting was held with representatives from the school council.

The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body and the lead governor for safeguarding. A telephone conversation took place with the school improvement partner for the school and a meeting was held with the chief education officer for The Partnership Trust.

A wide range of documents was looked at, including documents relating to safeguarding, attendance, the improvement plan and school evaluation, governing body minutes and information about the progress that pupils make. The 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey were taken into account as were the views expressed by parents who talked to inspectors during the inspection. Staff views from the 51 responses from an online survey were also taken into account.