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Julie Jeanes
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Dear Mrs Jeanes

Short inspection of Linwood School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Andrew Buckton and Her Majesty's Inspector Tracy Hannon, 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 March 2013.

The school continues to be outstanding

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

In response to a growing local demand for specialist support for pupils, you have successfully overseen the growth and development of several new teaching campuses. This has not got in the way of the strong vision and commitment that you, your governors and staff share to provide outstanding teaching and learning for pupils. Strong mutual respect resonates throughout the school. Across the different sites, staff share a drive to ensure that pupils are equipped with the skills of independence they need to thrive. Through your work with local business partners, pupils can look forward to work placements that allow them to experience the world of work in real, yet supported, environments.

Strong governance supports the strategic development of the school very effectively. Governors share a strong commitment to provide an outstanding quality of education for pupils within their community. They provide a wide range of skills and experiences but are not at all complacent in their vision for the school to contribute positively to the local community, as well as being a leader in its field. Governors agree that the school could expand its work to support pupils in local schools.

Since the previous inspection, you, ably supported by your senior team, have

developed a new system for assessing the progress that pupils make. Leaders and teachers now have frequent information that describes in detail what pupils understand, know and can do. Any weaknesses in the progress pupils make are identified and extra support is quickly put in place. As a result, pupils make at least good, and often outstanding, progress across the school. Many of the parents and carers who expressed a view described how pleased they are with the care and attention to individual pupils and their particular needs.

There has also been much thought put into the development of what is taught. Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils are able to succeed no matter what challenges they may face. For pupils who have more complex learning needs, leaders and their team have developed and adapted a specialised curriculum that helps pupils to develop successful learning habits. For example, learning how to adapt to changes in routines helps pupils to cope when things change.

A feature of the school is the detailed knowledge that staff have of the needs of each pupil. Each pupil has a detailed individual learning plan that outlines their particular needs and next steps. The expansion of the school has allowed particular specialisms across different campuses. At the Springwood Campus, for example, every possible adaptation is made to the learning environment and to the organisation of the day to ensure that pupils can be successful and feel proud of their achievements. Very small improvements are widely celebrated. As a result, pupils who perhaps in the past have not been able to join in or contribute are more often able to do so.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff rightly place safeguarding pupils at the heart of your work. All mandatory checks and pre-employment vetting arrangements are robust. Procedures in appointing and training staff meet requirements so that they know what to do in the event of any concerns that may be raised. Staff are vigilant and aware within a strong culture of safeguarding. Governors are also appropriately trained, although they have not recently checked the single central record for themselves. You are proactive in working with external agencies, as required, which has on occasion led to direct intervention and support for vulnerable pupils.

Inspection findings

- We agreed some key lines of enquiry to explore further. We looked in detail at the progress that pupils make in a range of subjects across the school. You have ensured that the recently developed assessment system is now embedded into daily teaching and learning. Staff have a clear view of what good and outstanding progress look like. You work with other schools to check the assessments being made. You agree that it would be useful to arrange even more opportunities to do this.
- Teachers use the detailed 'I can' statements that have been specifically developed to match the needs of pupils. In this way, small steps that pupils make are identified and the next steps planned into learning experiences. Pupils enjoy

the sense of achievement and success and therefore lessons are typically positive, with pupils engrossed in their activities.

- We also explored how the school supports attendance. Staff work closely with a range of agencies, including an education welfare officer. Together, they ensure that families are supported should there be any issues with pupils attending well. Staff keep close communication with parents during times of longer absence to ensure that pupils are safe.
- We also considered whether the courses and work experience offered to students in the sixth form build on their interests and achievements. The outstanding progress made across each campus prepares students well for the innovative work-based learning experiences. Students' progress is carefully checked using the school's 'employability skills framework'.
- Through this use of assessment, staff ensure that students can contribute successfully and learn new, valuable skills as they complete work placements in a supermarket, hotel or other community setting. Students explained, 'I've changed a lot, doing this' and, 'This will really help me to get a job.' As a result of the school's work to prepare students for their next steps, they successfully move on to further education, employment or further training when they leave the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to refine pupils' assessment by increasing the opportunities to share and compare assessments with other schools
- the school develops its support for pupils in other schools through outreach work.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held several meetings with senior leaders. Alongside leaders, inspectors made visits to see learning across all the different campuses. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils and looked at pupils' workbooks and assessments. A meeting was held with governors, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting also took place with a school improvement adviser who regularly supports leaders. A telephone call took place with a representative from the local authority. An inspector also spoke to several parents on the telephone. The 26 responses to Ofsted's online

questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. The 60 responses to an online staff survey were also taken into account. Several school documents were scrutinised, including the school evaluation and improvement plan and documents relating to attendance and safeguarding. Recruitment procedures were also looked at, including the school's single central record.