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1 March 2019

Mrs Lisa Hodgkison  
Headteacher  
Springfield School  
Crewe Green Road  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 5HS

Dear Mrs Hodgkison

### **Short inspection of Springfield School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019 with Linda Griffiths, 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 November 2013.

#### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead a warm, caring and welcoming school. You and your leadership team are passionate about striving to improve outcomes and life chances for the children in your care. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything that you do.

When pupils join the school, staff quickly foster effective and supportive relationships. Teachers help pupils to build their self-confidence. As a result, pupils respond positively to the support they receive. They make excellent progress both academically and personally. A comment from a pupil typifies this: 'Springfield changed my life.'

Your staff have an exceptionally detailed understanding of each pupil's needs. Staff work closely with parents and carers to support pupils to develop as individuals. Parents spoken to during the inspection valued the excellent quality of communication with staff. Parents were extremely positive about the high quality of care their children receive at your school.

Staff are proud to work at the school and challenge pupils to achieve their best. Staff work tirelessly to meet the individual needs of pupils. The design of the curriculum ensures that pupils can access learning accurately matched to their individual ability. Flexible planning enables pupils to move between groups. As a result, pupils can access the most appropriate lessons in each subject. This ensures that staff challenge pupils to develop their strengths. Teachers also provide effective support for pupils to improve where they are less confident. As a result of high-quality teaching, pupils make excellent progress.

The range of needs presented by pupils attending the school is changing. The reflective approach of leaders has enabled them to respond rapidly to these changes. This has enabled leaders to maintain the outstanding quality of education provided by the school.

Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths as well as the areas you wish to develop. Their strategic oversight provides effective challenge to the school.

The local authority values the work of your school. It is investing in the school's future by building new facilities. This will enable the number of pupils attending your school to increase. It is important that school leaders maintain the current outstanding quality of education as the school expands. The effects of any disruption must be minimised and staff must continue to receive appropriate training in order to meet the changing needs of the pupils.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors asked leaders to extend the use of technology to develop independent communication skills. This has been very effectively achieved using tablet computers and voice synthesis software. Now, pupils who previously relied on others to communicate on their behalf can speak for themselves. This has increased their confidence and independence. It has also had a very positive impact for their families. You explained how parents have been able to describe the life-changing impact of this technology at home. The result of this investment is that pupils can communicate with a wide range of people in an age-appropriate way. Inspectors saw the positive impact of this in school during lessons and unstructured times.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. The care and attention given to all pupils reflects this. Pupils' safety and well-being have the highest priority for all staff.

The designated safeguarding officer is trained effectively. She is knowledgeable, both in relation to safeguarding practice and about the pupils in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff are thoroughly trained to support the pupils in their care. Through appropriate training, staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding practice. Leaders ensure that all staff maintain their understanding through regular briefings. As a result, staff are highly vigilant about potential risks. Accurate maintenance of training records ensures that all staff have received the latest training. Induction procedures for new staff are thorough.

Staff engage closely with parents, carers and appropriate authorities to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. The systems to safeguard pupils are robust and monitored carefully by leaders, who take swift action when safeguarding concerns are raised.

Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. All governors have undertaken safeguarding training. The safeguarding governor visits the school regularly. She meets with the designated safeguarding officer to maintain oversight and scrutiny of relevant processes.

Pupils say that they feel safe and know that they can share any concerns with an adult. Parents agree that their children are safe in school and that they are well looked after.

Leaders use the local authority safeguarding team to provide regular external oversight of safeguarding procedures. The local authority representative told inspectors that leaders respond very quickly to advice. There is a culture of constant vigilance within the school. Leaders reflect on current practice and act swiftly when they identify an aspect that requires improvement.

### **Inspection findings**

- I wanted to know about the progress pupils make in literacy. Leaders have introduced a new system for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The previous system was not flexible enough, given the changing needs of your pupils. The new system assesses aspects of pupils' learning that the previous system was not able to assess.
- You have also introduced a new system for recording pupils' progress. This corresponds to the new assessment system. The new recording system allows teachers to link digital records of pupils' achievements in a variety of forms. As a result, the evidence of pupils' progress is more accurate. This is particularly the case for pupils with high needs. Parents are also able to access these records. This has further strengthened links with home. Parents spoken to during the inspection valued this extra information.
- School information, evidence seen in lessons and records of pupils' work show that pupils make excellent progress in literacy. Records of pupils' work show that they respond well to teachers challenging them. In lessons, pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their writing.
- I was also interested to find out how effectively leaders promoted equality across the school. The curriculum design ensures that throughout the school there is age-appropriate teaching about equal opportunities. Staff are well trained to support the individual needs of each pupil. This ensures that all pupils are helped to achieve the maximum they are capable of.
- Pupils attending the school have a wide range of needs across a wide age range. It was clear to inspectors that there is a high level of respect for each other across all ages and needs. For example, during a school council meeting, pupils were able to listen to a range of different views. Pupils respected the time taken by some students to communicate. Older pupils respected the views of younger pupils.
- School records show that bullying is very rare. An electronic reporting system records behaviour incidents. Leaders monitor and analyse reports closely to check for trends in behaviour. Leaders respond quickly and effectively when trends are identified. For example, a new group of pupils struggled to control their behaviour during unstructured time. Leaders took swift action to address this issue and put in place support for this group of pupils.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the outstanding quality of education is maintained when the school expands by reducing disruption and training staff to meet the changing needs of the pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Burgess  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and other leaders. An inspector also met with two members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.

An inspector met with a group of students. Both inspectors spoke with pupils and students at social times. An inspector also met with a group of parents.

Leaders accompanied inspectors on visits to classrooms, where they observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects. They also looked at pupils' work across the school.

Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They also scrutinised a range of policies and leaders' school improvement plan and self-evaluation. Inspectors also checked on the school's website.

Inspectors considered the responses of nine parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, along with free-text comments. They also took account of 33 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.