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Nigel Roper
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Roper

Short inspection of The Stonehenge School

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 2017 with Shelagh Pritchard, 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

You provide the school with strong and aspirational leadership and a clear sense of direction and ambition. Your self-evaluation precisely and accurately identifies the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve further. This enables you, supported well by your excellent deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and governors, to consolidate what is working well, build on the strengths and mostly deal effectively with those aspects that do not meet your high expectations. Governors are well informed and provide you with a good balance of support and challenge to hold you to account well.

Your pupils are great ambassadors for the school. They are smart, polite, respectful and a joy to talk to. They behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They take pride in the school and support, and contribute to, the school's ambitious and aspirational culture. They enjoy many of their lessons and show good attitudes to their learning. You, other leaders and teachers successfully build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. You look after them well and many thrive. This is very impressive given the high proportion of vulnerable pupils and the large numbers who had not achieved well by the time they started in the school and who arrive at times other than the start of Year 7, often in Year 10. You are fully aware that a number of pupils need to attend school more often.

You and other leaders provide an excellent balance of tracking the progress and achievement of individual pupils and groups of pupils extremely rigorously and knowing their individual circumstances, needs and, for many, their vulnerabilities exceptionally well. This means that great care is taken of each pupils' all-round development and preparing them very well for their next steps when they leave the school.

Pupils currently in the school are making at least good progress across a wide range of subjects. They make strong progress in English and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities show excellent analytical skills in talking and writing about, for example, the changing relationships between key characters in a Shakespeare play. The weaknesses in history have been resolved. Pupils are making better progress in science, but their understanding of key scientific ideas and how they link together is still too superficial. Their scientific reasoning skills are not developed well through investigative work. In some subjects, including mathematics and science, some of the most able pupils could be challenged more to enable them to really show what they are capable of. When pupils are given clear feedback on their work they respond well and make further progress, in English for example. This good practice is not evident in all subjects.

The recent in-depth review by and your deputy headteacher shows that you fully understand that more needs to be done for some of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A high proportion of pupils are identified as needing additional support, too many in your view, and this stretches your limited teaching assistant resource far too thinly. As a result, these pupils do not make consistently good progress across a range of subjects. This is exacerbated by the high number of 'high needs' pupils, many joining the school late, who require dedicated support. You have clear plans to deal with this and to build on, for example, the excellent practice in English where these pupils make very strong progress.

The overall attendance of pupils has improved to now be in line with the national average. As a result of the extensive range of strategies you and your colleagues use, including working as closely as possible with parents and with other agencies, the attendance of many individual pupils who previously were persistently absent has improved markedly. However, despite this, too many disadvantaged pupils and some of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are still too often not in school. This is a key area for improvement and you fully understand that it is holding the school back.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements and records meet statutory requirements and are fit for purpose. Staff training is comprehensive and effective; its impact is closely monitored.

Pupils are very well cared for. Ensuring that pupils are safe and well looked after is at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils respect each other and adults, are tolerant of others and behave very sensibly and safely around the school. Pupils are

well informed about all aspects of keeping themselves safe through the curriculum, assemblies, tutor time and other focused activities and events. You rightly place a lot of emphasis on ensuring that pupils are fully aware of e-safety and the risks of online bullying. Leaders keep detailed records which they check carefully to identify and act on the lessons to be learned from any incidents that occur.

Governors monitor the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding carefully. Safeguarding and child protection are considered at all governing body meetings so that the effectiveness of the arrangements are scrutinised thoroughly. The governor responsible for safeguarding meets frequently with the school's safeguarding lead and with the other staff with safeguarding responsibilities. Regular formal meetings are supported by frequent informal discussions. Governors are very well informed and fully involved in the analysis of all incidents and identifying and implementing the lessons learned. There are robust arrangements for dealing with any concerns raised by parents and these are rigorously followed.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that we would look at the progress being made by the most able pupils in a range of subjects.
- These pupils in all year groups are challenged well in English and make excellent progress. They mostly do very well in mathematics, although some are not challenged to show what they are really capable of. They also now make strong progress in humanities subjects and in languages.
- In science, these able pupils are not challenged to develop and explain, either orally or in writing, their deeper skills in scientific reasoning. They are not able to confidently make links between key scientific principles and ideas.
- We also agreed to check how well pupils with low attainment when they joined the school, including those who are also disadvantaged, are supported. These pupils in all year groups are supported well and are currently making strong progress in English, mathematics and many other subjects.
- Overall, disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to others with the same starting points in all subjects. Their progress in English is, as for other pupils, very strong.
- We discussed at length your concerns about the achievement of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those with statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans are very well supported and do well. The progress made by others varies across subjects. Some are currently not making the progress they should.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and some of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities improves further

- pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently strong progress across a wider range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Discussions took place with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, teachers and two members of the governing body. Inspectors talked to pupils in all year groups in classrooms and around the school. Inspectors also reviewed case studies of individual pupils. A range of documents was evaluated, including the school self-evaluation and the analysis of attendance, pupil progress and achievement, and other information.

Inspectors visited classrooms, accompanied by senior leaders, in different year groups and across a range of subjects. They looked at pupils' work and talked with them about it.

Inspectors undertook a range of activities to check the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including checking documents and talking with pupils, teachers, school leaders and governors.

Inspectors took account of 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 24 with additional comments.