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Mr Simon Vines  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Vines

### **Short inspection of Sherwood Park School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 2018 with Kanwaljit Singh, 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 October 2013.

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

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

There have been significant changes since the previous inspection. These include the opening of another school site at Sherwood Hill Campus, increasing pupil numbers and, from September 2017, your appointment as headteacher.

During the inspection, pupils said that they enjoy coming to school and are happy. They like activities such as swimming, horse riding, work experience and shopping. On the day of the inspection, pupils were well behaved both in lessons and at other times of the day. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong.

Parents and carers told inspectors that you and your staff work well with families and they feel strongly supported. They said that you and your team are very approachable and go over and above expectations, to bring out the good qualities in pupils. Parents also said that they are very happy with the school and that you communicate effectively with them. They said that pupils make strong progress both academically and emotionally.

Your staff feel supported by you and your senior leaders and are highly appreciative of the training you provide to improve their teaching skills. They said that you are committed to their growth and development and describe the school as a 'learning community'. Staff say that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school and enjoy working there.

Governors are knowledgeable and provide leaders with the right balance of support and challenge. The chair of governors has extensive experience within special educational needs.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Pupils said that they feel safe and if they were worried about anything, they would tell teachers or older pupils. They said that there is no bullying. Parents said that the school keeps the pupils safe.

Staff know the correct procedure to follow if they have a concern about a pupil. They know individual pupils exceptionally well and fully understand the risks they may face due to their vulnerabilities. Staff training is kept up to date and includes training in the 'Prevent' duty as well as female genital mutilation.

The attendance of some pupils is affected by their medical needs. The school, however, has robust monitoring procedures and does all it can to ensure that pupils come to school regularly. Leaders have ensured that all aspects of safeguarding are secure and record keeping is of high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on some key lines of enquiry. First, we agreed to look at what have leaders have done to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Inspectors visited classes across both school sites, accompanied by you and other senior leaders. We saw that signing, visual prompts and other ways of communicating were used effectively to ensure that pupils understood what they were being asked to do. In most classes, we saw that pupils had opportunities to learn as independently as possible because teachers had ensured that resources were well organised. In these classrooms, pupils had the best opportunities for making progress and achieving.
- In early years, we saw that children were given opportunities to choose from a wide range of activities and resources that stimulated them well. They chose learning activities independently and were supported appropriately by staff to extend their learning. Pupils were clearly making progress and enjoying their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the points for improving teaching identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. They evaluate teaching and learning accurately and understand that pupils make the best progress when teachers plan lessons that are matched precisely to pupils' individual needs.
- Next, we agreed to look at how the curriculum meets the individual needs of the pupils within the school. In recent years, the needs of the pupils have become more complex and also more diverse. You have recently introduced new curriculum models to meet the needs of the different cohorts of pupils within the school and to further facilitate a more personalised approach. The school now has three different learning pathways designed to cater respectively for pupils with severe learning

difficulties, with profound and multiple learning difficulties and with autistic spectrum disorder. You recognise the need to develop new assessment approaches alongside these curriculum pathways, so that pupils' progress can be effectively measured.

- Students in the sixth form are given appropriate opportunities to work towards independence and to prepare them for adulthood. For example, during the inspection, they went around the school taking orders for and preparing sandwiches with different fillings by following a recipe, safely used a sandwich toaster and tidied up after themselves.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how effectively therapies are used to enable pupils to access the curriculum and make progress. Inspectors saw strong examples of therapy being integrated into lessons. In a dance session, occupational therapy was incorporated effectively into the lesson. Medical needs were also well supported in class. The Sherwood Hill site has recently focused on pupils working towards being able to regulate their own emotions, so that they are ready for learning. At the start of the school day, we saw that pupils have very specific and individually planned programmes to follow, according to their needs. This ensures a calm start to the day and prepares the pupils well for learning.
- The therapy team works highly effectively with the teaching staff to assess pupils' needs, set appropriate targets and produce progress reports. Strong leadership has ensured that additional therapies are integrated well into the curriculum and this is a clear area of strength in the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new curriculum pathways are fully embedded
- new assessment approaches are developed alongside the curriculum pathways, in order to fully capture the progress pupils make.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tarrant  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspection team met with you and your deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, middle leaders, lead therapist, teachers and teaching assistants. We reviewed the school's single central record of staff suitability checks. We also met with

the chair of governors, a group of parents and the school improvement consultant. We held a telephone interview with the assistant director of education and special educational needs for the local authority. Inspectors visited classes across the school accompanied by you and other senior leaders to gather a range of evidence related to teaching, learning and assessment. We met with pupils to talk about their experience of school and aspects of safeguarding. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, and assessment and progress records. Inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the staff questionnaire and nine responses to Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.