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Mrs Kirsty Prawanna
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Prawanna

Short inspection of Glyne Gap School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2019 with Emma Phillips, 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 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leadership team and staff share an ambitious vision for all your pupils. Through your determined leadership, you have created a community where leaders and staff are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for pupils. Together, you endeavour to unlock pupils' full potential so that they can lead happy and fulfilled lives in the future. As a result, pupils thrive in this school and are well prepared for their next destination.

The school meets the often extremely complex needs of its pupils well. The systems and record-keeping for administering medication are rigorous and robust. All staff are fully trained to support the pupils. This has become of increasing importance, given the widening range of health and care needs that pupils have. Staff take the time to ensure that they have a detailed knowledge of each pupil and their individual needs. This enables staff to provide pupils with the right support and learning experience. Consequently, pupils, including the disadvantaged, make excellent progress. Pupils told inspectors that they are very happy at the school. In joint lesson observations with leaders, the pupils' behaviour was exemplary, and they joined in the learning activities enthusiastically. All parents and carers who completed the Ofsted online survey Parent View believe that the school keeps pupils safe and happy. One parent said: 'This is a school with a "can do" attitude; they prepare their pupils for the real world and believe in giving all pupils access and opportunities which they might not be given elsewhere.'

The governors recognise the positive impact of your effective leadership on the school's development. All governors visit regularly and are very well informed about the school's work. Governors share the ambitions of leaders and staff, while providing a high level of challenge. Governors hold leaders to account and set clear targets for the school's improvement.

At the last inspection, inspectors highlighted the school's many strengths. They also recommended that leaders continue to strengthen the academy's systems for measuring pupils' progress. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a robust assessment process. This accurately captures the communication, independence, behaviour, social interaction and attainment of the pupils. This comprehensive set of information enables governors and leaders to analyse progress carefully, instigate interventions and help teachers to plan effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff recognise the vulnerabilities of your pupils; as a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding that runs throughout the school. You and your team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that pupils' safety has the highest priority. The school has a robust induction programme for new staff, ensuring that everyone has a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regard to keeping pupils safe. Regular training for staff means that they receive frequent updates about a wide range of safeguarding matters. Staff are clear about the processes for reporting any concerns, and these are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Strong partnerships with parents and a range of agencies ensure that pupils get the help and support that they need. Governors recently commissioned an independent external review of safeguarding. Leaders are proactively addressing recommendations from this report. As a result, governors are confident that the school is effective in its work to safeguard pupils.

The school provides a caring and supportive environment in which pupils thrive and families are supported. Pupils say that staff take good care of them and they know who they would talk to if they were worried about anything. Parents who spoke to inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said: 'The school go over and above to ensure individual needs are met. It is a wonderfully happy school full of love, warmth, patience, kindness and understanding.'

Inspection findings

- Leaders have devised a curriculum to enable pupils to live happy, purposeful and fulfilled lives both now and in the future. The curriculum was designed to help pupils to develop life skills, for example to be as independent as possible, to communicate their choices and be understood, and to enjoy purposeful play and leisure activities. Additionally, the curriculum will enable pupils to contribute to their families, communities and society, including work where appropriate, and to have and maintain positive relationships and friendships. Pupils engage fully with the opportunities and experiences provided through their individual learning

programmes and the well-planned curriculum. Leaders recognise the perpetual need to adapt and develop the curriculum continually to meet the changing needs of the pupils.

- Leaders use their comprehensive assessment system to devise individual goals for pupils. These goals are both achievable and ambitious. Additionally, parents and staff create a 'super goal' for each pupil. A super goal is the one thing that will make a real difference and is transformational to a pupil's life. Last year, a large number of pupils achieved their super goals. These included a pupil being able to operate an electric wheelchair safely, thereby allowing the pupil to gain valuable independence. Where pupils are not making the progress planned for, carefully devised interventions are put in place. As a result, the school's most recent assessment information shows that pupils, including the disadvantaged, make very strong progress.
- Leadership of the sixth form 'faculty' is strong. Leaders have a clear purpose and vision for the sixth form, focused on maximising students' preparedness for the next steps in their lives. The quality of education for students is outstanding, because they are provided with a curriculum which is highly individualised and suited to their needs. Additionally, a few students are developing the personal work-related skills to enable them to access volunteer or employment opportunities in the future. Leaders are tireless in their ambition for all students to move on to appropriate destinations where students can lead as full, happy and independent a life as possible. A dedicated transition leader helps to ensure that all students progress from the school to the right placement to suit their requirements.
- The complex medical needs of some pupils mean that there are times when illness causes them to be absent. However, you acknowledge the importance of continuing to improve pupils' attendance. You and your staff work closely with the medical professionals to help support these pupils and their families. For other pupils, staff work proactively to engage with parents to reduce absence. As a result, pupils' attendance is good.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop the curriculum to enable pupils to leave with the skills and aspirations to become as independent as possible, pursue purposeful activities, contribute to their family and community and, where appropriate, gain meaningful employment.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Conway
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, my colleague and I met with you, the school's leadership team, and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke on the telephone to the local authority's adviser as well as the governor-appointed adviser. We visited classes in all key stages to observe pupils' learning, talk with pupils about their progress and look at their books. All lesson observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team.

We spoke to a group of pupils. We also spoke to parents at the start of the school day and looked at 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including 14 free-text comments. We also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys from 45 members of staff. We looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors, safeguarding, the curriculum and assessment. We examined the school's analysis of pupils' progress and attainment, leaders' self-evaluation and their plans for improvement.