

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 February 2018

Mrs Celia Wright
Headteacher
Sunningdale School
Shaftoe Road
Springwell
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR3 4HA

Dear Mrs Wright

Short inspection of Sunningdale School

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018 with Michael Wardle, Her Majesty's 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 judged to be outstanding in April 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 and your leadership group are a very strong and cohesive team. You lead the school with passion and commitment. Importantly, you have secured the strong support of the other leaders and staff, who share your deep commitment to every child at Sunningdale. As a result of the school's effective leadership and your colleagues' successful work, pupils develop the positive attitudes, confidence and skills they need to learn well and make progress in all aspects of their development. This was evident throughout the inspection.

Inspectors identified one area for improvement at the school's last inspection:- 'To ensure that the complex and detailed information that senior leaders produce is made available in formats that are more succinct in order to make it quicker and easier for others to understand and use'. You have tackled this well. You have ensured that information is presented in a way which is appropriate for the audience it is intended for. Parents, carers and governors have expressed their appreciation that the information they receive is helpful and contains all the relevant information they require. They have found it accessible and useful in their roles supporting the pupils in your school. Your staff have also said that they receive information which helps them to ensure that they can fulfil their roles to the best of their ability. Professionals who are working in a multi-agency way with your pupils have said to the inspection team that they view the information they receive as 'second to none'.

Your summary self-evaluation gives a clear and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. For example, you understand the need to develop the skills of the newer governors to enable them to provide the challenge that you have demonstrated you find so helpful in your reflective approach to school development. There are clearly identified actions in the school's development plan which show your drive always to look for ways the school can continue to improve.

Governors make a strong contribution to the school's leadership and management. This is because they work closely and effectively with you and the senior leadership team. As a result of comprehensive reports and well-organised governing body meetings and through regular school visits, you make sure that governors are knowledgeable about all areas of the school's work. You actively involve them in discussions and decision-making and you value the way that they challenge you and hold you to account. Governors have used regular visits to increase their understanding of pupils' needs. They talked knowledgeably to inspectors about the progress pupils are making, for example in their social and emotional development and in the development of their communication and interaction skills.

Parents were unequivocally positive about the school's work. The parents who spoke to inspectors highlighted the hard work and dedication of the whole staff team and the significant support you give to pupils and their families.

The actions taken by you, senior and middle leaders and governors have placed the school in a strong position to continue to deliver excellent outcomes for your pupils. You have seamlessly instilled a clarity of purpose, and leaders wholeheartedly embrace the new challenges you have set in your drive to look constantly to improve the outcomes for your pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

You have an excellent understanding of pupils' health and medical needs and you work in close partnership with a range of professionals and health practitioners to make sure that pupils' needs are met. You and your staff are knowledgeable about the things that make children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities vulnerable. This is because you provide regular high-quality training and updates for staff and you make sure that concerns about pupils are identified and reported in a timely way. Similarly, you are vigilant in checking that pupils who are fully dependent on adults for their daily care needs are safe and protected.

You work closely and effectively with other professionals and services to make sure that pupils who may be vulnerable are identified quickly and their families receive the timely and effective help and support they need.

Inspection findings

- I was keen to find out more about how you are assessing and tracking the progress pupils are making and whether this gives you an accurate picture of how well they are doing. I found that the school has developed a clear and comprehensive assessment and tracking system which is used very effectively to monitor the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils. It is being used by staff in the school to recognise the areas each pupil could further develop. They then make highly effective individual pupil learning plans. Management of pupil performance information about the standards pupils are achieving is incisive and highly organised. Leaders are using this information to drive improvement initiatives which are helping to raise standards across school even further. Leaders' skills and understanding around assessment, particularly in the field of SEN and disability, is shared with other schools as part of the teaching school alliance.
- I was also interested in how you have ensured that the high quality of teaching seen at the last inspection has been maintained and continues to have an outstanding impact on achievement over time. It was clear that staff have a deep understanding of pupils' learning needs, and there are strong, trusting relationships between staff and pupils. This has led to a very effective approach to teaching and learning. The lesson observations, work scrutiny, conversations with pupils, staff and parents, together with the data we analysed during the inspection, reflected the leaders' view that teaching and learning continues to have an outstanding impact on achievement over time. However, leaders agreed that some of the procedures and plans used to support the evaluation of the teaching in the school could be improved to focus more on the impact of the teaching on the learning.
- I was also interested in the way you have responded to the area for improvement identified at the school's last inspection. The inspection team considered many forms of information sharing which the school has undertaken, including governors' reports, pupils' reports to home, professional reports for various meetings and internal school information sharing. We spoke with parents, professionals who work with the school, governors and members of staff. It was very clear that the school has worked hard to ensure that the information they share is clear and appropriate to the audience. The people spoken to were unequivocal in their feeling that the school provided them with the information they needed in a way which they found helpful and informative.
- Lastly, I wanted to consider the effectiveness of leaders' actions around maintaining high levels of attendance. We agreed that there are some circumstances when absence from school is unavoidable. However, I was impressed by the leaders' commitment to supporting families in ensuring that all pupils attend school whenever possible. There is a large support network in the school which is highly effective in supporting families, so reducing absence from school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- their unswerving focus on the impact on pupil outcomes is reflected in the school's policies, procedures and plans.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Garton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your senior and middle leaders, three representatives from the governing body, parents and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons with and without senior leaders, looked at the work in pupils' books and folders, and talked to them about their learning. Inspectors considered the results from Ofsted's online surveys. There were 12 responses to the online staff survey and no responses to the online pupil survey. There were two written responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors examined a range of documents including: information about attendance, safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' progress.