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Mrs Sara Jordan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jordan

Short inspection of Brook Green Centre for Learning

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 2018 with Sue Ivermee, 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 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

This is a school where no one stands still. Together with governors and staff, you and your leadership team are ambitious and passionate about improving the quality of provision for all pupils. There have been significant changes in staff since the previous inspection, for example there are new leaders of mathematics, English and computing. They have quickly become part of the strong leadership team. They and other subject leaders have spearheaded very effectively the new national curriculum changes. In all subjects, interesting and exciting activities are conducted in a calm and purposeful way. Observing pupils' arrival at school and visits to classrooms show that staff know pupils exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy their learning.

Staff morale is high. Teachers and support staff are diligent in getting the very best out of the pupils in their care. They benefit from having a wide range of high-quality resources to help them in their teaching. In particular, the design and technology, art and science departments make excellent use of machinery, for example a laser cutter, 3D printer and electronic/robotic equipment.

Pupils benefit from having attractive buildings and outside areas in which to play and learn. Money is spent wisely to enhance pupils' learning experiences through external visits and taking part in competitions in which they are successful, for example the 'Gravity Racer' (unpowered go-kart racing).

Leaders and governors have ensured that the school has continued to focus on the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement in mathematics continues to improve and pupils are developing numeracy skills throughout the school. In addition, the local authority is currently reviewing the provision for special educational needs, including the potential for a sixth form being part of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that the school has strong procedures and systems to effectively manage the safeguarding of pupils. Regular training and updates ensure that staff are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities. Pupils are safe and secure in lessons and at social times due to high levels of supervision. As a result there is a strong culture of vigilance throughout the school.

Strong relationships with a wide range of agencies ensure that pupils and their families receive the right support when needed. The safeguarding team keep comprehensive records.

Governors and senior leaders routinely check on safeguarding practices and act swiftly to make improvements.

Inspection findings.

- The first line of enquiry focused on pupils' achievements in mathematics. The new scheme of work strongly supports the teaching of each element of mathematics that needs to be taught in Years 7 to 9. It is comprehensive and clear. Good-quality training of staff ensures that it is closely followed and understood. As a result, each pupil has a programme of work that is matched to their individual need. The introduction of 'precision training' encourages pupils to quickly recall number facts, which is increasing their mathematical fluency. This is undertaken on a daily basis and also as part of their homework. The impact of this work is that pupils make strong progress. When pupils exceed their targets, you review them and even more aspirational ones are set.
- The next line of enquiry considered how the school's assessment systems are used to ensure that pupils reach their potential. The school's assessment, tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress are accurate and detailed. Pupils' progress is assessed in every subject, including physical education, and for their personal, social and emotional development. Over time, school records show that pupils' progress has been sustained or improved in all areas. Pupils know their targets and what they have to do to reach them. They enjoy having a full part in measuring their successes and identifying what they need to do next.
- Finally we reviewed how effective the curriculum and the quality of impartial careers advice are at meeting the needs and desires of the pupils. The information that the school has about pupils' learning needs and career aspirations is used to ensure that pupils follow the best learning pathway for them. You have continued to review the courses and curriculum provided throughout the school. You ensure that all aspects of the national curriculum are

covered, including pupils learning French. You ensure that they are adapted to meet pupils' needs and aspirations. The most able pupils can undertake GCSEs or equivalent in a suitable range of subjects. Those who struggle with their learning are also well supported to enable them to be ready for their next stages in learning.

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend the local college as part of their school week. This helps them to prepare for and understand the various options open to them after they leave Brook Green. Pupils in Year 11 are provided with good-quality impartial careers advice and support. This includes supported 'taster days' and visits to the local colleges. As a result, almost all pupils continue with their learning at local colleges. Staff also use these visits to keep up to date with how well former pupils are doing on their college courses. Pupils in Year 11 also have work-based learning experiences. We agreed that they would benefit even more from having these experiences earlier.
- You have started to use recently published guidance on how best to develop the school's careers advice. This guidance is based on current international research of best practice. You are using the benchmarks provided in the guidance to help improve this area of the school's work.
- When visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work, we noticed that the quality of staff handwriting varies and doesn't always model best practice for pupils to copy and learn from. We also noticed that some pupils, particularly those new to the school, need more support to use systematic, synthetic phonic skills to help them when sounding out new words and to improve their spellings.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop the careers advice and workplace learning experiences for pupils
- all staff model the best quality of handwriting and support pupils to use phonics skills to improve their spelling.

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

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the timetable and activities for the day. Accompanied by yourself or senior leaders, we made short visits to all classes to observe pupils' learning and scrutinise evidence of their work. We met with other leaders and members of the governing body. We spoke with the school council and a few parents and carers.

We took account of the six responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The 42 responses by staff to Ofsted's electronic questionnaire were considered. There were no responses by pupils to Ofsted's electronic questionnaire.

We considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including records relating to safeguarding, pupils' attendance, assessment, the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan.