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Mrs Samantha Steinke-Sanderson  
Headteacher  
St Elizabeth's School  
South End  
Much Hadham  
Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mrs Steinke-Sanderson

### **Short inspection of St Elizabeth's School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 2018 with Sharon Wilson, 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 September 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 have developed strong teamwork between health professionals, therapists, teaching assistants and teachers to ensure that each pupil is making good progress. You have continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now consistently good. You rightly recognise the need to move it to outstanding by increasing the proportion of pupils who are making better than expected progress towards their individual targets. You have developed a strong ethos for teaching, learning and good behaviour within a supportive family environment where everyone is valued. You enjoy the full confidence of parents. This was reflected in discussions with some of them and their very positive responses in the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View and their text responses during the inspection. One parent typically wrote, 'I can't praise this school enough for helping my child to learn and make such brilliant progress; the headteacher and all the staff do a fantastic job.'

You benefit from strong support from school leaders and governors, who share your vision and commitment to continuous improvement. You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection so that all pupils, including those who have more complex needs, are making good progress because of teachers' consistent use of assessment. School leaders regularly check that teachers' assessments are accurate, and you are also effectively involving pupils in their own assessments of how well they are doing. You have also provided more opportunities for pupils to talk about their behaviour and as a result they make rapid progress in their personal development, which continues to be good.

Leaders have improved and developed resources for learning and in the play areas to enable all pupils, including those who have more complex needs, to enjoy full access to learning. These developments, especially in strengthening teaching and learning and successfully tackling the areas for improvement, clearly demonstrate good capacity for continued improvement.

Pupils are growing in confidence as they move through the school, and greatly improving their attitudes to learning. They focus on their activities, listen to their teachers and try their best. Pupils take a great pride in their work, which was seen in their books, which were well presented. Pupils' attendance greatly improves because they enjoy all the school offers, including the wide range of educational trips and visits, such as visits to the theatre and the canal trip. Pupils learn about different cultural traditions and know that other religions in the world share much in common with Christianity. Pupils' good spiritual and social development was seen during the celebration of confirmation of five pupils during the inspection. Older pupils take on additional responsibilities. Students in the sixth form are well prepared for the next stage of their lives and move on successfully into further education or training

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, the staff and governors work closely with parents, health professionals, therapists and outside agencies to promote a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose by implementing the school's policies to promote the welfare and safety of pupils effectively across the school, including in the sixth form. The staff show pupils how to stay safe when moving around the school and during school trips and visits, which they do.

All potential risks to pupils' safety in all activities are rigorously assessed and staff always ensure that pupils' personal dignity is maintained during changing, feeding and medical routines. You thoroughly record the rigorous checks you make on the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children and you have ensured that all staff training is up to date. Parents and pupils agree that pupils feel safe and say that there is no bullying in the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- To demonstrate that the school remains good, I wanted to find out how effective teaching was in enabling all pupils to learn and make progress, especially in communication. Your improved system of appraisal, based on regular monitoring of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress over time, has strengthened teaching and learning. Teaching is now consistently good. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' individual needs based on their accurate assessment. Teachers and teaching assistants use the information about pupils' prior learning well to ensure good learning, especially in developing communication skills. Staff formulate individual learning plans for each pupil and set targets in basic skills, which they review and update each term.

- The school's data and outcomes from reviews of individual learning plans show that most pupils, including those in care, are making good progress from their different starting points. Personal education plans are very detailed, and teachers use the additional funds well to develop pupils' confidence, independent living skills and communication skills. The work of health professionals, therapists and teaching assistants in supporting teaching and learning greatly enhances communication skills of all pupils in lessons. Occasionally some pupils do not make faster progress towards their targets because teachers miss the opportunity to extend their learning.
- I also wanted to find out how relevant the curriculum was in meeting the different needs of all pupils and preparing them for the next stage of their education, especially in developing independent living skills. This was because there was little information about the impact of the curriculum in these areas. Your planning shows that the curriculum is specifically adapted to the individual needs of each pupil and takes full account of the provision specified in each pupil's individual education, health and care plan. Planning includes support from therapists and health professionals to develop communication, independence and life skills. The wide range of opportunities to enrich learning, through after-school clubs, visits, visitors to school such as the magician and curriculum days involving parents, effectively promotes pupils' enjoyment, well-being and achievement.
- Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit from a sensory curriculum to promote access to learning. Those who have moderate to severe learning difficulties benefit from a modified national curriculum with an emphasis on developing basic skills. Students in the sixth form follow relevant courses and programmes in key skills, based on their chosen pathways, determined through high-quality careers guidance and thorough transition planning. They also attend St Elizabeth's College to prepare them for transition and develop their independence skills. Each student has an independent living plan which is reviewed termly with staff, the student and parents and carers. Students greatly benefit from opportunities to engage in small enterprises each term and work in the school's charity shop. As a result, most students move on to further education or training at St Elizabeth's College or a local college.
- Finally, I wanted to determine how effectively governors were monitoring the work of the school, especially in relation to the compliance of the website and the impact of provision on pupils' learning and well-being. This was because some information for parents was missing from the website and there was not enough information on the website about the impact of the work of governors in these areas.
- Minutes of their meetings show that governors regularly visit the school to obtain their own view of the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' learning and well-being. They are ensuring that all policies are regularly updated. The governors ensured that the gaps in the required information on the website were all filled in before lunchtime during the inspection. They rightly recognise the need to ensure that leaders regularly check that the website complies with requirements and is always kept up to date.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers extend pupils' learning further so they make faster progress towards their targets
- governors and school leaders check the school's website to make sure that it is always compliant.

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

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection my colleague inspector and I met with you, other school leaders, the director of education, and two governors. We carried out joint visits with senior leaders to every class to look at the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning. We also looked at samples of pupils' work in their books and the photographs on display showing their achievements over time. We talked to pupils about their learning and heard a few pupils read. I took account of parents' views by holding telephone discussions with seven parents, examining the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their text responses. I also looked at the 42 questionnaire responses from pupils in your own recent survey. We looked at range of documentation including: your self-evaluation document and school improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings; your safeguarding policies and procedures; attendance figures; records of behaviour and the school's information about the progress that pupils are making.