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Mrs Linda Mardell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mardell

Short inspection of Walton Leigh School

Following my visit to the school on 19 July 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Joanne McSherrie, 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 February 2014.

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 other leaders continue to provide pupils with a calm, welcoming and supportive school in which to learn. Pupils are happy and friendly and get along well together. They behave well, work very hard in lessons and enjoy the wide variety of exciting opportunities you offer them.

You and your leadership team are passionate about striving to improve the outcomes and life chances for all pupils. All staff have strong, in-depth knowledge of the individual needs of pupils, and hold high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are committed to strengthening pupils' progress and to their care and well-being. Staff treat all pupils with an exceptionally high level of dignity and respect.

You, along with other leaders, have an accurate, informed view of the school. In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, you have successfully introduced effective new systems for teachers' assessment and planning.

Governors are extremely well informed, having detailed knowledge of all aspects of the school. They share your passion for achieving the best possible outcomes and

opportunities for pupils. Parents and carers are hugely positive about the school, with one parent stating: 'The encouragement, acceptance and kindness that every member of staff shows are amazing.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements in the school are fit for purpose. Records are very detailed and of a high quality. Appropriate training for staff covers all aspects of pupils' welfare, including medical issues, and ensures that everyone working with pupils knows how to keep them safe. Governors provide support and rigorous challenge to leaders so that the safety and well-being of pupils are the highest priority.

You have effective communication systems between school, home and the outside specialist services that work with pupils. Your leaders are relentless in their pursuit of support and information from the local authority and outside agencies.

This is a caring school in which pupils feel safe and secure. Supportive, trusting relationships mean that pupils know who to go to for help with any concerns. Pupils who can access the internet have a good level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe when online.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make outstanding progress during their time at the school, both academically and personally. Clear embedded routines, the knowledge of expert staff and creative and flexible approaches enable all pupils to be as independent as possible. Individual learning plans are 'pupil-friendly' and effectively support pupils to make excellent progress in areas such as behaviour, confidence and self-esteem. The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress are thorough and comprehensive, and leaders use pupils' assessment information effectively to shape the school's development strategies.
- Along with senior leaders, you make sure that lessons are highly motivating and engaging. You have effective school systems in place for teachers' assessment and planning. These systems ensure that learning activities are designed to meet the individual needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils understand their work, enjoy learning and find the curriculum engaging and fun. You provide staff with a wealth of professional development opportunities. Staff appreciate these opportunities and, as a result, both teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled and effective in supporting pupils in their learning.
- You provide an extremely broad and varied curriculum for pupils. The practical opportunities available are wide-ranging and include woodwork, yoga and DJ skills. Weekly educational sessions in the local community and annual residential trips contribute to enabling pupils to make excellent progress with their independence and social skills. Parents fully appreciate the opportunities offered to their children, and pupils talk excitedly about how these engaging activities help them to make progress and prepare them for their future life.

- You, along with other leaders, including governors, are reflective and insightful and are aware that the forthcoming changes in the senior leadership team could have a big impact on the school. Your plans to further develop the roles of middle and senior leaders will help to make the transition as smooth and disruption-free as possible for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop middle and senior leaders so that changes in leadership have minimal impact on pupils' outcomes and on the school's outstanding provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Maxine Mcdonald-Taylor
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

My colleague and I met with you and other leaders. We visited lessons with the head of secondary school and the assistant headteacher. We observed lunchtime and playtime and visited a range of options activities, including the choir and a DJ skills session. We spoke to some pupils in class and looked through their work. We held meetings with key staff about the progress of pupils, the curriculum and safeguarding. We also met with a group of pupils and, separately, with a group of staff to hear their views about the school. We met with governors and spoke with a representative from the local authority. We considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, Parent View, including free-text comments. We also spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day to hear their views. We scrutinised a range of the school's documentation and a selection of pupils' work.