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23 February 2018

Mrs Karen Potts
Headteacher
KS1 Pupil Referral Unit
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Dear Mrs Potts

Short inspection of KS1 Pupil Referral Unit

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 2018 with Zoe Westley, 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have a clear vision for improvement, which staff understand and support. This, combined with the support and challenge from your governing body, is ensuring that you continually take action to improve the school.

The school currently has children in the early years foundation stage of their education. Children receive excellent support as they learn through a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, they take part in practical reading interventions and are able to get dressed in their outdoor coats with little or no support.

Attendance is good. Children enjoy attending school and this is seen in their words and actions. For example, they take delight in showing visitors their work and reading to the pets, such as the therapy dog. Parents and carers agree that their children want to be in school. They are positive about ways in which their children's attitudes have improved since joining the school.

Children's behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children are supported and challenged to learn and develop tools to modify their behaviour, such as moving themselves away from difficult situations and having 'kind hands'. Teachers use positive praise and rewards successfully to encourage this development. Difficult and challenging behaviour is rare because the environment and structures meet the needs of the children.

Occasionally, when disruption does occur, staff deal with it in a calm manner and defuse it quickly so that children's learning continues.

The curriculum has a strong focus on nurturing children. Teachers plan activities which support children's behaviour needs in order to ensure that they are ready for learning. You ensure that classrooms are calm environments, which allow children to settle quickly and teachers to establish positive routines for learning.

Since the previous inspection, you monitor more robustly. This is ensuring that staff have an accurate picture of children's abilities and needs as they enter the school. Through this, they accurately plan for improvement. The monitoring of outcomes is not as strong and is something we agreed should continue to develop.

Children's transition back to mainstream schools is a success of the school. The partnership working and training programme that is in place ensure that teachers from other settings learn and develop their practice to support the complex needs of the children. Staff at all levels support parents to repair their relationships with the mainstream schools to support success.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, training is undertaken by all staff and records are of a high quality. Your team of designated safeguarding leads works effectively across both sites to support and manage children who have complex issues and reports these to the local authority when necessary.

Safeguarding practice across the school is strong. Staff show an awareness of its importance and demonstrate a secure understanding of their responsibilities.

Children have many opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. Through the use of focused weeks and topic-based work, children learn about physical and mental health, road safety and online safety. Children commented on how exercise was fun and kept them healthy.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on how teachers use their knowledge of children's attainment to set work accurately to ensure that they make good progress. Rigorous baseline monitoring ensures that teachers plan for individuals from their starting points. Children who attend the school full time learn phonics, taught in distinct groups based on ability. This supports children to make rapid progress in this area.
- Leaders have begun to make changes to the way that they record and monitor children's progress information. Information is broken down into different groups, which provide helpful management information. There is no marked difference between the progress of disadvantaged children and that of all children in the school. However, we agreed that teachers could challenge the higher-ability children more effectively to ensure rapid progress. The small number of children

at the school makes group analysis difficult, but leaders are using what information they have to reflect and implement strategies to continually improve.

- The leadership and teaching staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. However, these high expectations need to be embedded across the curriculum to ensure that all children are challenged to make strong progress towards their age-expected levels.
- Teaching assistants work effectively throughout the school for additional support for children and for small-group work. They are well trained, confident and competent to deal with negative behaviours shown by the children, should they occur.
- A further focus of our visit was attendance and behaviour. Attendance across both full- and part-time placements is good. All staff build positive relationships with parents to ensure that children's attendance increases, in some cases significantly, from their attendance at mainstream school.
- Children are clear about what teachers expect. There are well-established routines throughout the school and high expectations for children's behaviour. Incidences of disruptive or negative behaviour are dealt with effectively by staff and high-quality records are kept. Robust procedures ensure that parents are kept fully up to date with their child's behavioural progress and supported to make similar changes to routines at home. Parents appreciate the information; one parent told the inspectors that she 'felt really informed. I knew everything as if I was there; especially what and why it happened.' This effective partnership working helps children to make good progress.
- You have a strong emphasis on rewards across the school. Children understand the different rewards, for example smiley faces earned for showing good behaviour in different parts of the school day and taxi stickers given to children whose journey to school is positive. Short, sharp interventions encourage children to bring their behaviour back on track if they make a mistake.
- Each session starts with the sharing of home-school news. The children are comfortable to share their diaries with the class and talk openly about their behaviour successes and struggles. This practice helps children to make links between this school and the home school. Positive language and personal rules used by this school are mirrored in the home school, leading to consistency of behaviour management. This practice aids the child's transition back to their mainstream school.
- The curriculum of the school is well thought out and meets the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the children. Mathematics remains an area of development but leaders are aware of the strengths and are responding to identified weaknesses through increased staff training and support from the local authority school improvement partner.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes and success criteria are more sharply focused to allow leaders to more

accurately track and measure children's progress

- higher-ability children are challenged to make rapid progress. Leaders should ensure that the high expectations placed on the children regarding their behaviour are mirrored for their academic achievements.

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

Patricia Stevens
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, the deputy head and members of the teaching and support staff. Meetings were also held with the chair of the governing body, the local authority school improvement partner and a group of parents. Telephone conversations were held with a representative from the local authority and a member of staff from the child and adolescent mental health team. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, children's progress information, attendance information, behaviour analysis and the single central record. Lesson observations were made of both the part-time and full-time classes and a forest school lesson.