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Mr Mark Collis
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Collis

Short inspection of Fiveways Special School

Following my visit to the school on 23 November 2017 with John White, 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, and the governing body, have maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You rightly note, in the accurate school self-evaluation, that adults have high expectations, set challenging targets and provide excellent individualised support for each pupil. As a result, the outcomes for pupils remain outstanding. Pupils continue to reach their potential through learning and playing in a happy, secure and caring environment.

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the school. You, other leaders, and the governing body have managed these changes well. For example, the changes to the physical environment have made the entrance lobby inviting and welcoming. The hall is now a fantastic place in which to work and play. Changes to the start of the school day have increased the quality and consistency of communication across class teams.

You, the governing body, along with all the staff at the school are relentless in driving improvements. You are all passionate about providing the best life chances for the young people in your care. Parents and pupils said how much they appreciate the hard work and dedication of staff.

You, and other leaders, are mindful of the need to keep under review the work-place provision available for older pupils. The school ensures the development of independence for those pupils who have the most complex needs for when they leave school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, other leaders and the governing body ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and the staff work closely with the other providers and agencies to protect the safety and well-being of pupils. Adults in the school appreciate that ensuring the safety of pupils is everybody's business.

Staff know whom to go to, and what to do, if they have any concerns. When concerns arise, the school works flexibly, and adapts practice to reduce risk. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and monitored, including by the governing body. The school makes appropriate adjustments to mitigate risk. This includes making changes to the physical environment such as gated stairways and changes to the traffic flow at the entrance of the school. Pupils' use of pelican crossings and traffic lights enables them to extend what they learn about road safety in the school environment to life in the local community.

All staff and the governing body are highly conscious of the potential risks to the children and young people in their care. The safeguarding of pupils is a permanent agenda item for meetings. All staff receive frequent, appropriate training. New staff have good-quality induction training in safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- Our first line of enquiry on this inspection was to see how effectively you, and the governing body, had reviewed the resources available for those pupils who have the most complex physical difficulties. Following the review, the governing body has ensured that more funds have been allocated to ensure that these pupils can take a full part in all the learning activities and opportunities that are available. The school's investment in the new curriculum for those pupils who have the most complex difficulties and in the greater use of current modern technology is paying dividends. The changes to the curriculum are seamlessly integrated throughout the school day. Staff are very effective at teaching these pupils the skills necessary to gain greater physical independence in sitting, standing, and walking.
- The second line of enquiry was to see how well you, and other leaders, continue to ensure that pupils make strong progress, while effectively meeting their desires and needs. We found that pupils continue to make strong progress in a suitable range of curriculum areas. Comprehensive records are kept by teaching staff and leaders related to individual pupils' personal learning goals. Pupils understand what they are expected to do. Pupils use a variety of methods to express their views. Staff are highly responsive to pupils' needs, knowing them and the pupils' families well. Using the comprehensive personal support plans, they understand the best ways to support the individual young people in their care. Families know exactly what their children are learning and what they need to learn next, as a result of strong communication between home and school.
- The inspection's third line of enquiry was to see if pupils were attending school as

often as they can. Pre-inspection information showed that persistent absence was high, particularly for girls. However, close examination using school records shows that this is as a result of pupils being absent due to medical conditions. The school works exceedingly closely with families to help support them and their children. This includes when pupils are not well enough to attend school. Regular visits by school staff enable pupils to return to school smoothly. Sometimes this involves an appropriate part-time timetable that is gradually increased when pupils are ready.

- The final line of enquiry looked at the curriculum and, in particular, what older pupils are learning in order to prepare them for life after leaving school. The curriculum used throughout the school is age appropriate, including for those who have the most profound learning difficulties. You ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. When leaving school, all pupils continue in education, training or employment. We discussed how the school might work with local organisations and providers to develop more opportunities for older pupils to have access to work environments, such as through supported apprenticeships and internships.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- continue to develop the local special educational needs offer with other organisations to ensure that older pupils have more opportunities to gain access to the workplace.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. 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. We worked extensively with you and other senior leaders throughout the day. We met with other leaders and members of the governing body. We spoke with groups of pupils and observed them during the day. We scrutinised the quality of pupils' work and observed pupils learning in lessons.

We considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including records relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching, the curriculum, assessment information, the

school's self-evaluation and action plans.

We took account of 16 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, we took note of 20 paper questionnaires from staff, and a previous survey, with 39 responses from parents, provided by the school. There were no responses from pupils or staff to the Ofsted online surveys.