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Mrs Jacky Tattershall  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Tattershall

### **Short inspection of Kelford School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 2019 with Berni Moorcroft, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking leadership, you have developed many areas of the school, including the curriculum. You and your senior leaders have a clear vision for the future of the school, which is understood and supported by staff. This, combined with the support of your governing body, ensures that the school is moving forward and has the capacity for continued improvement.

At the time of the last inspection, opportunities were being missed to develop pupils' communication skills and their independence. You have ensured that communication is a focus throughout the school; one parent told inspectors that her non-verbal child has 'started to communicate' due to the work of staff within the school. Pupils discuss their work with staff and have independent choice on the activities to support their learning.

Since the previous inspection, you have introduced a new personalised curriculum. This enables pupils to work to address their specific need and to ensure strong progress from their individual starting points.

The school self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness and plans for improvement are clear and appropriate. For example, the plans identify further ways to improve pupils' attendance, increase parental involvement and ways of finding out pupils' views. Improvements since the start of the academic year can be seen through the

work of the school council and improvements in pupils' attendance.

Behaviour management systems are effective and staff understand the necessity of using these consistently. Pupils are supported to manage their own behaviour in the classroom; for example, during the inspection, a pupil chose to wear a weighted waistcoat which calmed him down and allowed him to settle back into his learning activity quickly.

The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students have a wide range of vocational opportunities to choose from alongside English and mathematics. The wider curriculum builds in opportunities for students to increase their independence, such as independent travel and preparing their own lunch. This ensures that the students are confident learners who achieve qualifications and move on successfully to further education, employment or training.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Your leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. The two designated safeguarding officers (DSOs) are meticulous and knowledgeable, both in relation to safeguarding training and the pupils within the school. Across all sites, the DSOs and their deputy work effectively to support and manage pupils who have complex issues and report these to the local authority when necessary.

The wider staff team has a positive grasp of safeguarding issues and understands the risks to their pupils. Staff are vigilant for signs of distress, agitation and any possible neglect and abuse. They are confident with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the school and know how to record and report any concerns effectively.

You ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe through the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils feel safe and can articulate how to keep themselves safe outside school, for example when online or on public transport.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has continued to improve and ensures good learning and achievement for the pupils. The thoughtful curriculum that you have established within the school, along with subsequent training, allows teachers to plan individually for pupils. This ensures that personalised education is available to all. However, we agreed that this needs to be developed further to ensure that all learning activities are of the same high quality, whether it is a main learning task or one chosen by the pupils.
- In key stage 4, learning tasks were closely linked to enrichment activities. For example, pupils had learned about the spring equinox through the use of hot cross buns. This was followed during their breaktime with pupils being supported to independently cook and eat a hot cross bun. As a result, pupils were able to

clearly articulate this link to the spring equinox to inspectors.

- During the inspection, the deployment and effectiveness of the support of teaching assistants were found to be variable throughout the school. Where support was more effective, teaching assistants were engaging pupils well with their individual timetables. For example, in a key stage 3 mathematics class, all pupils were engaged in their learning at different levels, using resources targeted specifically to their needs. However, in other lessons, teaching assistants spent time taking pictures of pupils carrying out activities rather than challenging those pupils to achieve more.
- The children's learning journey books in the early years show good progress for all children. They contain photographs, regular commentary and observations from key workers as to the children's learning and the next steps to be made.
- Those parents and carers who made their views known agree that their children are making progress. One parent commented: 'The staff don't stop until they find something that meets your child's need.' Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress. They appreciate the efforts made by teaching staff to find out how their child is developing at home, to build a holistic picture.
- A further focus of our visit was pupils' behaviour and attendance. Across the school, in the main, classrooms are calm learning environments and pupils are encouraged and supported to engage with learning. The small amount of disruption observed in lessons was managed well by staff and did not affect the learning of others.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' attendance has improved due to the measures put in place by leaders. Weekly extended leadership meetings to discuss attendance, along with the appointment of a family support worker who has developed systems to support parents, ensure that pupils attend school more regularly.
- Persistent absence by pupils is, in the main, due to long-term hospital stays and the complex needs of pupils at the school. The family support worker works closely with the families to ensure the welfare of the pupils and keeps a continuous link until the pupil is well enough to return to school.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and those spoken to say that the transition arrangements from the early years through to sixth form are strengths of the school. One parent said that the change that he saw in his son as he moved through the school was 'amazing'.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all learning activities, whether a main learning task or an activity chosen by the pupils, are of the same high quality
- teaching assistants are deployed consistently and effectively throughout the school to support the learning and development of the pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tricia Stevens  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, senior leaders and middle leaders. Meetings were held with three members of the academy trust, a group of pupils and two parents. A telephone conversation was held with the interim chair of the governing body. The inspectors visited the main school, Kimbleworth and The View and observed the arrival, learning, breaktime and lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, Parent View and staff surveys and the single central record of checks made on the suitability of adults to work with pupils.