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8 August 2019

Mrs Carol Argent
Headteacher
The Livity School
Adare Walk
Streatham
London
SW16 2PW

Dear Mrs Argent

Short inspection of The Livity School

Following my visit to the school on 16 July 2019 with Catherine Davies, 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 February 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The school provides very effective support for pupils who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You have led the school effectively and carefully managed the challenges of recent significant leadership changes. You know your school very well, and your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses is honest and accurate. This has supported you to put into place a number of school improvement strategies that have further strengthened the provision for pupils since the last inspection. Previous areas for development have been addressed effectively and strategically. For example, you have introduced monthly checks on pupils' attendance. This has enabled you to maintain attendance levels even though your pupils' needs have become more medically complex. You have also put in place a new system for reporting concerns. Where issues are identified, parents and carers feel they are swiftly addressed and suitable plans are put into place.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about their school, and report a sense of pride in being part of The Livity School. They feel that they have the support of school leaders and feel that the school is well managed. Highly effective work with external agencies ensures that staff have access to the specialist guidance they need. As a result, they feel confident to support even the most complex physical and medical needs.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Together, they have established a safe culture that is evident throughout the school. Your commitment to effective safeguarding practice is evident on arrival at school. For example, your administrative staff articulate clear procedures for all visitors. Staff vetting and checking systems are completed efficiently, and staff receive regular training and updates about all aspects of safeguarding.

Leaders demonstrate a high level of understanding and awareness of safeguarding concerns. Weekly safeguarding meetings with other professionals allow leaders to explore issues and reflect on their practice.

Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe at all times. Staff manage pupils' transition on and off buses effectively. The families that I spoke to reported that this is a safe place to be, and that staff at your school genuinely care about everyone in the school community.

Behaviour observed during the inspection was exemplary. Pupils moved around the school safely and showed respect to others. The pupils I spoke to were respectful, confident, and able to share their views about different aspects of the school. Pupils who need additional support in managing their behaviour have individualised management plans that are applied consistently. Systems for recording and monitoring behaviour are effective, and enable leaders to effectively target support.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. This inspection focused on leaders' capacity to ensure the school continuously improves. I also focused on how well pupils are challenged to make the best possible progress, and how the curriculum supports this.
- The school has a well-thought-out plan to provide consistent, high-quality leadership over the next year. There is exciting optimism about the opportunities to further strengthen the school that the proposed changes to leadership bring. However, the parents I spoke to told me that they are anxious and uncertain about the future.
- Leaders know the school exceptionally well. They make good use of information about the pupils' progress to strategically plan interventions, for example in taking the brave move to rewrite the personal, social and health (PSH) education curriculum following disappointing pupil outcomes. These interventions do not always work, but the leaders are honest and reflective. Where planned interventions do not work, staff are quick to put new strategies in place.
- The governing body is highly skilled, and has a wealth of relevant experience. However, governors do not all engage sufficiently with the school. This makes it difficult for them all to make informed strategic decisions, and to test out what leaders tell them.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in English and mathematics because staff work

alongside leaders, parents and therapists to agree goals. In addition, pupils almost always achieve the targets set at education, health and care plan review meetings. Where leaders identify small gaps in achievement, they respond swiftly to put interventions in place to secure improvements.

- The expertise of the multi-disciplinary team has been effectively shared with staff so that they can better support pupils' learning. Particular attention is paid to preparing pupils to learn, and supporting their physical well-being. Consequently, staff provide a calm and nurturing learning environment in which pupils' individual needs are paramount.
- Relationships are warm, and staff are skilled in settling pupils and supporting them to access the curriculum. However, at present, there is no consistent system for measuring progress in pupils' personal development. This is despite there being compelling evidence to suggest that they make strong progress with their social, communication and physical development.
- In early years, the curriculum promotes the engagement of all children through the use of exciting sensory techniques that grip their attention. Children are keen to participate through singing and movement. As a result, they are becoming increasingly able to listen carefully, be part of a group, and to develop independence.
- The curriculum is carefully crafted and well matched to meet the range of pupils' complex needs. There is a regular review of teaching to ensure lessons engage and inspire pupils. Where necessary, the curriculum is skilfully adapted. The parents I spoke to told me, 'the curriculum is built around my child', and, 'it is just what I need it to be'. Recently appointed middle leaders have written clear curriculum guidance to further improve provision for pupils with profound needs and those with autism spectrum disorder.
- Highly effective partnership work with speech and language therapists has helped staff to confidently use a range of communication support strategies. There is universal use of signing and symbols, allowing learning opportunities to be seized throughout the day. The school's 'total communication' approach equips pupils to access learning, and to express their thoughts and needs well. Consequently, pupils develop their independence, and are able to make meaningful choices about their lives. This has significantly reduced the number of behaviour-related incidents as pupils learn to communicate in other ways.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they maintain the quality of education during the upcoming changes to the leadership team
- systems are put in place that allow governors to better understand the challenges leaders face, and to test out what leaders tell them
- there is a consistent system that captures the impressive progress pupils make in their personal development.

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

Yours sincerely

Francis Gonzalez
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. You accompanied the team inspector on a series of short visits to lessons. We held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, the curriculum, removing barriers to learning, and measuring pupils' progress. Meetings were held with the chair of governors and one other governor, and with other professionals. A meeting was also held with a group of pupils and a group of parents.

We worked with senior leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and assessment information on pupils' progress. We looked at a range of documentation. This included the improvement plan, attendance data, records of pupils' progress and behaviour, and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. The inspection took into consideration 22 responses to the staff survey. There were four responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.