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Mrs Suzanne Pennington  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Pennington

### **Short inspection of St Andrew's School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2018 with Linda Lyn-Cook, 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 November 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 the previous inspection, there has been a great deal of change. The school has overcome a number of staffing challenges over the last two years. Leaders and governors have acted decisively to identify and address weaknesses. They have also ensured that the long-standing strengths of the school are further developed. For example, you recognise the need to develop staff skills further in the area of providing individual support to pupils and to develop accreditation opportunities for students in the sixth form.

Leaders have effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Health and safety requirements are being met and parents and carers are provided with a range of bespoke courses to help them understand their child's learning.

Leaders have also correctly identified the strengths of the school and the areas for further development. School self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders provide teachers and governors with high-quality continuing professional development from members of the teaching school alliance. School staff provide training to mainstream schools within the alliance. This training and the support are valued highly and are effective.

School leaders have been less successful in ensuring that the school development plan helps to secure necessary improvement. A shared understanding across the school of the

priorities and key actions for development is not fully evident.

Pupils were keen to show inspectors their work and to talk or sign about what they were learning. Pupils were really excited to tell the inspector what they had learned about *Oliver Twist* and the character Mr Bumble. Pupils were well mannered, polite and friendly. The relationships between staff and pupils are good. All pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about school, typically stating that, 'the staff are awesome and the lessons are fantastic'.

Parents and carers who spoke with the inspectors are supportive of the school. They are confident that their children achieve and make good progress. A representative comment was, 'This is a brilliant school. My son is making very good progress. He loves coming to school'. Parents believe that pupils are well cared for and are safe because the staff understand their care and healthcare needs well.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding and care are at the heart of the school and high priorities for all staff. There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Regular training and targeted update sessions ensure that all staff are aware of current legislation and know how to report and record their concerns. An online system is used effectively for this purpose. The school administration team and designated safeguarding leads make sure that all the required checks on staff, governors and volunteers are undertaken, recorded diligently and then securely stored.

Staff work effectively in partnership with other agencies; for example, they support 29 families at the level of early help, provide courses for family members to attend and support families outside school. The team works effectively with the on-site nurse and externally with members of social care and the community paediatrics team.

Medicines used in school are stored securely and the procedures for their administration are robust and understood. Health and safety of the site are regularly reviewed. Prompt action is taken if any work is required. Pupils trust the adults in school and talk with them about any worry or concern. You and the safeguarding staff make sure that pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including through the strong programme for personal and social education. Pupils' attendance is monitored and reviewed by leaders, and there are effective safeguarding systems in place to check on the well-being of those who are absent. Pupils are happy in school. The leadership team and governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, inspectors looked particularly at the actions leaders have taken to maximise progress for all students during a time of change and challenge. We also looked at how effectively leavers are prepared for their next steps in preparing for adulthood and how leaders use the school self-evaluation and the development plan to maximise school improvement.
- School leaders have acknowledged that progress overall has slowed over time. This is because of past staffing instability. You have taken decisive action to minimise any disruptions and have ensured that pupils affected by them are now provided with additional teaching support, which is well matched to their needs and aspirations. Rapid and sustained progress is now evident, particularly in the areas of communication, English, independence, personal and social care, and individual, work-related portfolios documenting a wide range of achievements over time. This demonstrates strong progress from pupils' and students' individual starting points. However, the additional adult help available is not consistently or effectively deployed.
- The school has developed effective working relationships with local businesses. Nearly all students access good-quality work placements linked to their interests and needs. For example, students learn about the care of animals at a local pet store, about manufacturing at a local skateboard company, or engage in work experience within the school. You and staff have taken care to ensure that the curriculum at key stages 4 and 5 emphasises the world of work and preparation for adulthood. There is strong evidence in individual students' portfolios of this. As a consequence of strong teaching, careful careers guidance, and planning involving families and other agencies, including local colleges and employers, students are well prepared for their next steps.
- Students learn about the world of work and develop secure work-related skills. Over the last three years, almost all students entered an educational course after leaving school. Inspectors noted that a limited number of accredited qualifications was available for sixth-form students.
- Current leaders know the school well and have the capacity and determination to improve it further. You and other senior leaders, including the governors, have made sure that the school's self-evaluation is increasingly accurate. However, the school development plans are not as effective in driving further improvement in provision and outcomes.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they refine the school development plan to make it more effective in driving further improvement in the school's performance
- the impact of the work of those staff responsible for additional support is further enhanced to secure effective school improvement.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gary Nixon  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, and the chair of the governing body. I met with the school improvement adviser, and spoke on the telephone with a member of the governing body. Inspectors met with teaching and non-teaching staff. They observed pupils arriving at school in the morning, spoke with parents and spoke and signed with pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, undertook a range of work scrutiny (books and portfolios and picture evidence). We studied in detail the school's self-evaluation document and the school development plan. We visited classes with school leaders to observe teaching and learning and visited social areas to observe pupils and students playing and socialising. We scrutinised behaviour records and risk assessments, and a detailed range of safeguarding and child protection documentation. Inspectors held discussions with support staff and administrators responsible for safeguarding. We also analysed attendance data. We considered the 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire, the four responses to Ofsted's free-text service for parents and the 11 responses detailed in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.