

8 February 2019

Mrs Lorraine Wilson
Headteacher
Kingfisher School
Radley Road
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 3RR

Dear Mrs Wilson

Short inspection of Kingfisher School

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 2019 with Janis Rogers, 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 Kingfisher 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.

You lead the school with a determination to ensure that all pupils engage in learning and make good progress from their starting points. You are supported ably by your senior leadership team, whose members share both your vision and care for the pupils. Teachers and support staff hold the same high expectations that all pupils should achieve their best. The very large majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they are proud to be a member of staff and enjoy their work. As a result of your firm commitment and strong leadership, pupils are supported well and thrive at Kingfisher School.

Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. They say that staff support them well by setting work that is tailored to their particular needs. One pupil remarked: 'I feel safe at school. The teachers know about what helps each person.' At the start of the day, pupils join their classes quickly and are ready to learn, from the outset. The routines and values you have established are respected by all, resulting in positive behaviour throughout the school. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They feel it is well led. One parent stated: 'Hooray for Kingfisher and the magnificent management, teaching and admin staff.'

Leaders and governors have addressed the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection successfully. All teachers now use the school's system for

planning and tracking. Leaders and staff use this system effectively. It supports their much-improved understanding of the progress of current pupils. Staff are beginning to share best practice regularly. In addition, a highly developed focus on the needs of individual pupils, within the curriculum, allows all to access a wide range of learning experiences, including practical and musical activities. Teaching is typically effective. However, occasionally, it is not as strong in some classes as it is in others.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record details accurately the robust employment and background checks that leaders carry out on staff and other adults, before they work in school. Adults are trained appropriately in all areas of safeguarding and know what actions to take to keep pupils safe from harm.

The designated safeguarding lead works effectively with other agencies to make sure that pupils are safe. Staff maintain useful relationships with a range of other professionals to support highly vulnerable pupils.

You and your staff show an extremely strong commitment to pupils' well-being. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They know who to speak to if they have a concern.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked at leaders' actions to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are effective, including attendance. We also considered how effectively leaders monitor and evaluate lessons to ensure that all groups of pupils make strong progress from their starting points. We evaluated how well the governing body holds leaders to account for the current success of the school.
- Leaders' effective action has led to a rise in attendance. Key staff challenge absence and expectations are high. There are effective monitoring routines now in place. When pupils do not attend school, staff work determinedly to find out why and establish where they are. Pupils respond well to this high level of care and many are attending more regularly. Leaders work hard to involve outside agencies and rigorously follow up necessary actions.
- An effective system for monitoring pupils' progress is now in place. This is apparent in all lessons, with most staff using it well. The unique curriculum offers staff the flexibility to accommodate a wide range of pupils' needs. There is a powerful focus, within the curriculum, on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. However, there are still areas where teachers' assessments need to be more accurate to strengthen the progress that pupils make, including the most able. In addition, sometimes support staff are not used effectively in class.
- You have designed a curriculum that focuses directly on pupils' learning needs. Changing to a system of grouping pupils based on need, rather than age, has

transformed learning. For example, in a music lesson, inspectors observed pupils using music and movement to develop their sensory skills. They took part with enjoyment and confidence. In addition, middle leaders are beginning to take an increasingly important role in developing and refining what is taught within the different learning pathways.

- Additional funding, including pupil premium, is used effectively to remove the barriers to learning for those pupils who are eligible. Leaders robustly assess the effectiveness of their plans and review them frequently. When required, they take swift and appropriate action to ensure that all specific funds are used to maximum effect.
- You have a relatively small, yet passionate and committed governing body. Governors bring a range of skills to the strategic leadership of the school. Their wider knowledge and expertise have enabled you to improve accountability at all levels. This has resulted in standards being driven upwards. Despite this, you have correctly recognised that the recruitment of additional governors will help meet the increasing demands on those already in place.
- Members of the governing body are rigorous in their pursuit of high standards. They challenge leaders during scheduled meetings and visit the school regularly to check the validity of leaders' reports. Like senior leaders, governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They appreciate the work of staff and are keen to support you with the school's next steps.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve teaching and learning by ensuring that support staff are used more effectively
- the level of challenge in lessons is increased through the continuing development of the roles of middle leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Tostevin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We observed teaching and learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in all phases. All observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. We held meetings with you, senior leaders, teachers and support staff, as well as with the chair of the governing body and two governors. A telephone call was held with a representative of the board of trustees.

We scrutinised a range of documents, including: leaders' evaluations of the school's performance; minutes of the governing body's meetings; policies; safeguarding records; records of pupils' attendance and behaviour; and information about pupils' progress. We also scrutinised the school's website. We spoke to pupils during the day. We considered 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff, and 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including three free-text comments.