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Ms Steph Clancy
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Clancy

Short inspection of Hollywater School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2018 with Joanne McSherrie, 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 January 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 and your leaders have developed a highly committed and effective staff team which is well motivated to continually improve the school. You and your staff are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are supported and challenged to achieve well. You have a well-considered understanding of pupils' varied and often complex needs. As a result, you ensure that pupils in all year groups are making good progress.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They value your leadership, believe that the school has improved since the last inspection, and are sure that pupils are safe. Staff told inspectors that leaders support their professional development and well-being effectively, and that they value the way that their ideas contribute to the school's development.

Pupils are positive about the school. They told inspectors that the school understands their needs and that they are doing much better than previously. Inspectors found that pupils were engaged and focused in lessons, clearly enjoying their learning. The school is a calm and well-ordered environment. Pupils develop good behavioural and learning habits which enable them to work well with other pupils. They also respond quickly to adults' requests and directions. Relationships between pupils and adults are very strong. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well, which helps them to provide the right level of care and support for each pupil.

Parents' views shared with the inspector are more finely balanced. Some value highly the care and consideration of staff for their children and are pleased with the progress that their children are making. Others do not feel as confident, particularly about leadership and management, or feel well informed. You are aware of this, and wisely value the local authority's advice and support in this area.

You have been effective in addressing the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. The curriculum motivates and interests pupils, and work is usually pitched at the right level to stretch and challenge them. Work, both in pupils' books and recorded electronically, shows that pupils are generally making strong progress. Although the school's work is successfully improving the progress that pupils make, you recognise that it can develop further so that all pupils truly achieve their individual potential.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained and know how to identify any issues that need passing on, both to relevant agencies and the school's leaders. As was quoted to us by staff, 'It is at the forefront of everybody's mind'. The governing body maintains an excellent oversight of safeguarding. The safeguarding governor carries out regular visits and checks to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is strong. All governors consider aspects of safeguarding on their regular, formal visits to the school. Consequently, governors have a thorough understanding of this important aspect of the school's work.

Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They know who to speak to if they are worried. You have put in place effective arrangements to ensure that pupils use the internet safely.

Inspection findings:

- During this inspection, we examined how well leaders have continued to improve the school's effectiveness, and to address areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. We particularly considered:
 - the effectiveness of curriculum leaders in supporting the development of teaching, learning and assessment and how well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and
 - how well teaching supports all pupils to make at least good progress.
- I also gave careful consideration to the views of parents and the quality of the information available to them.
- Curriculum leaders have been given clear training, guidance and support, but also sufficient autonomy, to develop good teaching in their different subject areas. Subject leaders are well supported by senior leaders to develop their skills and influence the development of teaching. Helpfully, when developing learning in their subjects, subject leaders consider carefully how to support pupils best in

acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to be well prepared for life beyond the school.

- The recently introduced assessment system enables teachers to capture pupils' achievements well, through their practical activities as well as in assessing the work in pupils' books. This is enabling teachers to measure small gains in pupils' skills and knowledge accurately. As a result, teachers increasingly plan activities to specifically meet the needs of individual pupils, thereby developing their progress well. Furthermore, adults question and prompt pupils effectively during teaching, to keep them focused on their learning. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning and identified to inspectors the lessons they particularly like.
- Leaders are beginning to develop their use of the more detailed assessment information now available to them. This informs their analysis of where teaching can improve further, to ensure that each pupil makes the best possible progress from their differing starting points. This work is in the early stages.
- The curriculum is helpfully broad and balanced, motivating and exciting pupils. Pupils were keen to tell us about the range of experiences they have during their lessons and while on visits. Pupils were eager to describe in great detail, for example, what life was like for Iron Age people, demonstrating the impact of this topic on their learning. The pupils we observed were clearly interested and focused on their learning. However, pupils in key stages 4 and 5 said that they would like to know more about the options available when they move on to further education and would benefit from earlier planning for such transition.
- During this inspection some parents expressed their concerns that they do not always receive the information they need in order to understand how well their children are doing at school. They felt that school leaders do not respond effectively to their concerns. Other parents told inspectors that they feel well informed about their children. They said that any problems are discussed and suitable action plans put in place when necessary. Overall, the views of the 20 parents whose responses to Parent View were available on the day of the inspection were finely balanced.
- The information provided by the school, for example on the school website, is clear and detailed.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and at play. They are keen to learn, and work well with each other, showing respect and consideration for others. Even the youngest pupils have learned to follow routines and are happy to wait their turn. Pupils feel safe and secure in a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements to teachers' assessment of pupils' progress are further developed, and leaders use this information rigorously to identify strengths and areas for continuing improvement, both in teaching and in pupils' progress

- earlier planning supports the successful transition of older pupils to their next stage
- parents' overall confidence in the leadership and management of the school is assured.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Johns
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- We met with you, the deputy and assistant headteachers, four middle leaders, the home-school link worker, three governors and a group of five pupils. I also met with a representative from the local authority.
- We visited 11 lessons, accompanied by a member of the leadership team. We observed pupils' learning and behaviour in a range of situations, including during lessons and in the playground, and examined examples of pupils' work.
- We considered parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as correspondence and email contact from individual parents. We also analysed the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- We examined a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, improvement planning, minutes of the local governing body, information about pupils' progress, and safeguarding documents.