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Mr Paul Sweeney
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Dear Mr Sweeney

Short inspection of Chilwell School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2018 with Clive Worrall, 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have high expectations and strive to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. You and the effective leadership team are working well together to nurture the school's strengths and plan further improvements. The school development plan clearly articulates what needs to be done to further improve the school's effectiveness. Your colleagues' responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire make it clear that they fully support your vision for the school. Staff also value the support that they receive from senior leaders and value your strong focus on their workload, as well as their well-being. All staff model the school's core values of 'share, care, believe, achieve', creating clear expectations for pupils.

Pupils behave well and respect each other, staff and visitors. Pupils choose from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which develop their confidence, as well as the culture of aspiration within the school and the local community. A typical parental comment reflects this: 'My children receive not only the best education but also have the opportunity to engage in a fantastic range of extra-curricular activities.'

The governing body makes sure that the school uses the breadth of skills and experience it contains. Governors are actively involved in the school and know well its strengths and weaknesses. They analyse and interpret data effectively.

Governors use these skills effectively to hold leaders to account. As a result, they have contributed successfully to maintaining the school's focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors have also provided strong support to leaders in improving teaching across the school.

The previous inspection report identified that staff need to make even better use of funding and resources, such as the pupil premium, to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities attain as well as others, including in mathematics. Since December 2017, the senior leader responsible for the pupil premium strategy has strongly led improvement in this area. Changes to the way in which the strategy is monitored and evaluated have had a positive impact on teaching throughout the school. Heads of faculty regularly share best practice and the strategies that they use to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have SEN and/or disabilities. This has led to disadvantaged pupils making greater progress in most subjects, particularly English and mathematics. In addition, the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities provides staff with detailed information which identifies these pupils and the barriers to their progress. All staff have attended training on planning learning activities, and are, therefore, clear about appropriate ways to support these pupils. Teachers told the team that they felt very well supported in improving their classroom practice. As a result of these actions, leaders and the governing body are more confident that the funding is focused on the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors value all subjects offered by the school and have made tackling inconsistencies in pupils' progress a priority. They have higher expectations of middle leaders and are holding them closely to account for pupils' progress. Senior leaders have created regular opportunities for middle leaders and teachers to share best practice so that they have the skills that they need to increase pupils' progress. Leaders' actions have had some impact on pupils' outcomes, but there is more to do to ensure that progress is consistently good in all subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders collaborate effectively to ensure that a culture of safeguarding permeates the school and that staff are clear about their responsibilities. Recruitment checks and the maintenance of the school's single central record are rigorous. Record-keeping is thorough, secure and fit for purpose. Robust procedures are in place to follow up absence. All staff and governors are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and in the particular safeguarding issues relevant to the local community. Staff know what to do should they need to make a referral to the designated child protection lead.

A dedicated team of staff, coordinated by the designated safeguarding leader, supports vulnerable pupils. These staff work with determination and sensitivity with pupils, parents and carers and external agencies. Robust procedures are in place to follow up absence. Child protection practice is effective and timely action is taken to seek external help for pupils when needed. The school makes its expectations of safeguarding and communication clear to alternative providers who educate a small

number of pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The governing body routinely checks all processes and policies are secure and that the school's records are thorough and complete. Governors are strongly involved with all aspects of safeguarding. They are proactive in supporting leaders in developing strategies to support pupils who have emotional, social and mental health issues.

The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children are safe at school. Similarly, responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire overwhelmingly supported the view that pupils are safe at the school.

Inspection findings

- We considered leaders' actions to improve outcomes for lower-attaining pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. We looked at leaders' work to support disadvantaged pupils and the impact of how the school uses its pupil premium funding. In addition, we considered leaders' actions to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The pupil premium strategy is being revised to focus more clearly on improving teaching and support for disadvantaged pupils. It is being embedded more effectively across the school so that staff understand the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and how to overcome them. However, the analysis of the impact of strategies used is not detailed enough to give leaders an insight into which of these strategies is leading to the greatest effect on these pupils' progress. Current data shows that, overall, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving or exceeding their targets is increasing. The gap in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils, in Year 11, has reduced compared with 2017.
- Inspectors saw examples of effective actions and approaches used which were in line with the pupil premium strategy. For example, seating plans identify disadvantaged pupils, and teachers use pupils' current and target grades to help plan their teaching. Teachers consistently target questions so that disadvantaged pupils become more involved in discussions. Evidence from a work scrutiny, from a range of subjects, shows work is matched appropriately to disadvantaged pupils' abilities. Support from a specialist teacher for Year 9 disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact on their attendance, as well as their confidence and engagement in lessons.
- Middle leaders continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve the achievement of lower-attaining pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. There is strong collaboration to design an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. Literacy remains a priority and further strategies are being put in place to raise standards in reading. In most teaching and learning observed, inspectors saw how a focus on academic language and technical vocabulary enabled lower-attaining pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has led to more effective liaison between home and school, with the support of

external agencies. Strategies are used by teachers to plan learning activities that are well matched to these pupils' needs. However, although the school is able to show pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making progress, success criteria are not precisely defined or recorded in a format that enables leaders to precisely measure the impact of their actions.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils' attendance is good. The proportion of pupils who are absent regularly is in line with the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. Evidence from the school's records suggests that leaders' actions have already helped to reduce the number of pupils in both groups who are absent regularly from school.
- Outcomes for students in the sixth form continue to be strong. Best practice in teaching in key stages 3 and 4 is also evident in the 16–19 study programmes. As a result, students of all abilities are challenged and make good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school improvement plans make it clearer to staff what they are aiming to achieve
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continues to improve so that it is consistently in line with that of other pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you and other leaders, as well as members of the governing body. We met with the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and a group of teachers. We met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their learning. We visited mathematics, English, humanities and science lessons, in a range of year groups, with a member of the leadership team.

We examined a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the

school's effectiveness, the school development plans, information about current pupils' progress and attainment, analyses of both attendance and behaviour, child protection records and the current pupil premium strategy. We also considered 45 responses from Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, and 24 responses from members of staff to the online staff questionnaire.