

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 November 2018

Mrs Karen Dell
Head of Secondary Provision
Greys Education Centre
Manor Drive
Kempston
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK42 7AB

Dear Mrs Dell

Short inspection of Greys Education Centre

Following my visit to the centre on 6 November 2018 with John Craig, 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 centre was judged to be good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the centre has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the centre has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the centre's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have been appointed as head of the secondary provision since the previous inspection and together with the head of the primary and hospital provision, and governors and leaders from the multi-academy trust, you demonstrate an ambition and commitment to improve the centre further.

There are very positive and trusting relationships between staff, leaders, pupils and parents and carers, and this is a key factor in the success of all three provisions. Staff are dedicated, and consistent in their approaches and have a shared commitment to 'never giving up on a child'. One pupil told me that being at Greys made him happy again, while others told us that they preferred their lessons at Greys because you could talk to the teachers and that all of the staff listened to them and were approachable. Although there were no responses on Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, the comments that parents made on the centre's own survey were very positive, with one parent stating, 'my son has his confidence back and really enjoys learning again'.

The core purpose of the provision is to enable those pupils who are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded from their primary or secondary school to successfully return to a mainstream setting. This is an area at which both the primary and secondary provisions excel, with over 96% of the pupils in the primary provision and key stage 3 successfully reintegrating into a new school throughout the 2017/18 academic year.

For pupils who remain or join the provision in Years 10 or 11, there is a strong commitment to helping them acquire the skills necessary to prepare them for the next stage of their education, training or employment. This is clearly evident in the highly effective careers advice and guidance available, the increased range and number of externally accredited courses and the variety of experiences planned for pupils. These include outdoor adventurous activities to improve pupils' self-confidence and social skills. As a result, the vast majority of pupils leaving key stage 4 go on to further education, training, employment or apprenticeships.

Pupils attend the hospital school for long, short and recurring periods of time and numbers fluctuate daily. All children of school age are encouraged to access education while in hospital, but priority is given to pupils after day 3 of their hospital admission, and over 220 young people were supported by the service last year. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils attending the hospital school room. Pupils are, as far as possible, supported to continue with coursework from their own schools, and from the information available, it is evident that the provision staff work flexibly in order to respond to individual needs and challenges. The head of the hospital provision shared with the inspectors the potential negative effect that using a bank of supply teachers may have on securing successful pupil outcomes. He shared plans for an improved induction and training programme to improve further the quality of teaching for pupils, both on site and at home.

The considerable contribution made by leaders and governors has enabled the centre to move from strength to strength. They have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They have built on the many strengths identified in the last inspection and have successfully addressed the areas for improvement. Assistant headteachers have taken on a wider role in checking on the progress pupils make. They ensure that teachers use the information available to assess pupils' progress towards meeting their individual objectives, and deliver effective lessons so everyone can achieve their very best. All staff have high aspirations and expectations for every pupil, making sure that not a moment is wasted in lessons. As a result, pupils make strong progress from their different starting points and achieve both personal and academic success. Subject teachers meet regularly with their mainstream colleagues to keep up to date with local initiatives and are beginning to work more closely together to check pupils' work. Leaders are aware that there is a need for all teachers to share good practice across both the primary and secondary provision so that there is better consistency when making judgements about pupils' progress.

Attendance, while still below national averages, has improved considerably since the last inspection as a result of the very effective strategies that have been put in place across both the primary and secondary provision.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding pupils is the number one priority of all the staff. Pupils attending the centre, particularly at the secondary provision, are vulnerable and the centre does all it can to ensure that they are safe. The personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) curriculum is flexible and responds instantly to address issues that pupils may encounter in the local community, such as gang culture, knife crime and drug misuse. The provisions work closely with the police and other agencies who visit as part of these lessons. This provides pupils with the information they need to understand and manage risks both online and in the community itself.

The relentless drive, commitment and vigilance of the leadership team, together with that of all of the staff, result in safeguarding practices and procedures that are robust and effective. Ongoing training equips staff with the knowledge and expertise to identify concerns in a timely manner and to respond to need. The chair of the trustees ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- Primary pupils often make rapid gains in their learning. They are enthusiastic and keen to try their best. It is a more mixed picture in the secondary provision. Books, observations of learning and assessment information show that these pupils usually apply themselves to their learning, are productive in class and make generally good progress. This is due to the strong relationships between staff and pupils and the strategies used to encourage pupils to manage their behaviour and overcome previously poor attitudes.
- Pupils accept your high expectations that they will work and achieve as well as pupils in any mainstream school. As a result, they make good or outstanding progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils are given helpful advice and guidance about how to improve their work. There is clear evidence of pupils taking this on board and acting on it. Teachers make sure that pupils know how well they are doing and make it clear to pupils why they may be falling short of their targets. This is helping pupils make strong progress from their different starting points.
- Greys is a reflective teaching community, which is having a positive impact on the progress pupils make. You carefully assess each pupil's skills and aptitudes on arrival and create an individual profile that informs teachers' planning. You and your team ensure that pupils make strong progress in English, mathematics and science. You also offer a wide range of accredited work-related courses and extra-curricular opportunities that engage pupils' interests and inspire their curiosity. As a result, many pupils achieve well.

- Experienced trustees and governors share your determination to improve pupils' life chances. Governors rigorously analyse the information you provide prior to meetings about finance, pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. They ask searching questions and your subsequent responses inform the focus of their next visit. In this way, they offer effective support and challenge. Trustees and governors share your accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve and are actively involved in plans for improvement.
- Across both the primary and secondary provision, classrooms are calm learning environments and pupils are encouraged and supported to engage. The consistent implementation of the behaviour policy ensures that pupils are very clear about what is and is not acceptable and they respond well to the centre's reward system. The regular tracking of pupils' social and emotional well-being is very effective in measuring the impact of the interventions that have been put in place.
- The appointment of a school counsellor has had a significant impact on supporting pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, which is evidenced by the reduction in the number of inappropriate behaviours within the centre.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are more opportunities for peer observations across the primary and secondary provision so that good practice can be shared
- judgements on progress are secured as a result of subject leaders working alongside mainstream colleagues to check pupils' work
- the induction programme for hospital teachers is strengthened and that they are involved in training delivered by centre staff to increase the consistency of approach across all three sites.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Walker
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, the head of both the primary and hospital provisions, assistant headteachers and the careers adviser. We also met with a member of the local governing body and two of the trustees. We spoke with your local authority school improvement partner and the local authority lead on inclusion. We visited classrooms at the secondary, primary and hospital provisions to observe learning and talked to pupils and the staff who work with them. We looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and the school's self-evaluation and action plans. We conducted a full review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe, training records, recruitment checks and record keeping.