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Mrs Helen Casson
Headteacher
Community & Hospital Education Service Ap Academy
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Dear Mrs Casson

Short inspection of Community & Hospital Education Service Ap Academy

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2019 with Jen Southall HMI, 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 outstanding in May 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are passionate in your view that pupils should have the very best possible chance to continue their education no matter what barriers they face. Arriving a year ago, you have sensibly taken the time to review and gain an accurate and detailed understanding of all aspects of the school. You bring a rigorous approach to school improvement and a belief that there is always more that can be done to enhance the school so that it provides the very best for pupils. For you, good enough is simply not good enough!

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve opportunities for pupils to engage in physical activities. You look for all possible ways to enable pupils to be more active and to engage in learning beyond their homes. Pupils now enjoy practical subjects such as art and science in the hubs based in local colleges and health centres. This helps pupils to socialise with their peers more often. They develop their social skills and are therefore more likely to re-integrate into mainstream settings, where that is possible.

At the hospital base, staff help pupils to exercise as appropriate to their health needs. Pupils can use pedometers to measure the physical activity they complete. This is motivating for some pupils.

In addition, you have worked to enrich the curriculum. Wherever possible, pupils attend a local outdoor activity centre and enjoy physical activities. You and your staff team constantly seek to enhance learning further. You have exciting plans to develop a nearby forest school. These steps to increase activity help to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem, making them more likely to achieve success in future education or employment.

Local leaders and the local authority confirm that the school provides a flexible approach and seeks out solutions, and as a result pupils achieve well.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Across the various learning bases, including online, in pupils' homes, learning hubs, colleges, local schools and colleges and the hospital, there is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. The school's family support team works with families. While being considerate of pupils' medical conditions, the school has high expectations and expects pupils to take part in learning whenever possible. As a result, pupils do engage, and attendance has improved significantly.

Despite the numerous bases, a strength of the school is how well staff communicate and feel part of one learning community. This contributes to how well staff watch out for and report any concerns about pupils. Leaders work with a wide range of agencies and take concerns further if necessary, to ensure that pupils are safe and receive the support they need. Parents and carers who expressed views said that their children feel safe and secure.

Recruitment procedures are secure and meet requirements. Recommendations following safeguarding audits are rigorously and quickly actioned. Risk assessments are of high quality and are frequently reviewed and adapted. They take account of the additional risks posed by working with pupils in their homes and online. In the hospital, staff liaise well with safeguarding officers at the hospital. There are stringent checks to ensure that handwashing takes place at appropriate points so that pupils who are unwell are not subject to additional infections.

Inspection findings

- We explored how well the curriculum is adapted to meet the complex needs of pupils. Staff use their assessments to see where pupils' learning gaps are. They liaise with pupil's previous schools. During dedicated reflection time, they also listen to pupils' views of how well they have understood their lessons and take these into account when planning the next learning activities.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge, coupled with their solid understanding of pupils' social, emotional and health needs, to adapt the curriculum. During lessons, staff are not afraid to continually adapt what they do, working flexibly as they gauge pupils' emotional needs and anxieties. As a result, pupils gain a deep understanding of their subjects. For example, a teacher

skilfully involved pupils and they engaged in an online English lesson, discussing a text and working to understand complex vocabulary and concepts within it.

- Parents expressed their views about the progress their children make very clearly. A typical comment was, 'Staff work beyond the call of duty; their skill is phenomenal. The school is a lifeline for my daughter.'
- There is no complacency here. You are now working to further develop the key stage 3 curriculum plans so that they both inspire pupils and mirror mainstream settings as much as possible.
- We looked at how leaders work together to secure improvements to the school. The chief executive officer and school improvement partner know the school very well, as they talk to leaders and visit the school often. They share your determination to continue to make improvements.
- Staff appreciate the clarity of vision and strong leadership that you provide. They are solidly behind the changes. As one staff member said, 'It's refreshing to be in a workplace with such considerate management.' All staff who expressed a view said that the school is led and managed well.
- The management committee has the skills and experience that equip it to provide support and challenge to leaders. For example, one member with a background in safeguarding provided strong support to the school following a safeguarding audit to ensure that actions were completed.
- However, few additional activities take place in which committee members find out more about how the school operates or to provide additional challenge to leaders. In addition, the improvement plan does not provide the committee with timescales that outline the improvements that are expected over time. As a result, committee members are not able to challenge leaders robustly about the pace of change for agreed improvement priorities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the development plan includes clear timescales and milestones
- the management committee makes visits to gain a deeper understanding of the school's effectiveness.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Wave multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, senior leaders joined inspectors observing learning in classes and looking at pupils' work. Meetings were held with you, your senior leaders, teachers and the school's improvement partner. I met with the chief executive officer of the trust and two members of the management committee, including a member of the school's pupil performance steering group and the lead member for safeguarding.

I gathered the views of a leader from a local school with whom you work to support pupils. I also spoke to a representative from Cornwall local authority, who works with you to place pupils at the school.

Inspectors observed learning taking place at the hospital school, a learning hub and during online lessons.

Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own analyses of strengths and weaknesses, curriculum and assessment information, risk assessments and staff recruitment checks.

An inspector spoke with a parent, and views were also gathered from parents during telephone calls. No views were expressed on Parent View. Nineteen pupils provided their views on Ofsted's online survey and these were taken into account. The 26 surveys completed by staff were also considered.