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Mr Paul Silvester
Headteacher
Newman School
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Dear Mr Silvester

Short inspection of Newman School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2018 with Linda Griffiths, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

In the short time you have been at Newman School as headteacher, you have worked purposefully and with passion to maintain the good quality of education in the school. You have made sure that the school continues to adapt and develop in response to the pupils' rapidly changing needs. You have the strong support of your senior and middle leaders and staff, who share your commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and young people at Newman.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard, and are determined and resilient learners. This is because teachers plan lessons that are interesting and meet the needs of pupils well. Throughout the day, pupils are given the care and support they need to access learning. Time is given to pupils to complete tasks. Pupils told inspectors that you give them help when they need it and were full of praise for the care and guidance they received from staff. Occasionally, however, opportunities to develop learning for pupils with autism spectrum disorder are missed and occasions for these pupils to direct and manage their own learning are not always taken.

Inspectors identified two areas for improvement at the school's last inspection: first, to improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are good or outstanding by ensuring that all teachers are precise in what they want pupils to learn in lessons; second, for leaders to be rigorous in their judgements of the overall quality of

teaching. You have tackled these areas for improvement well. In all classes visited, teachers had set clear learning outcomes, ensuring that pupils' learning was of a high quality. You and senior leaders now hold secure judgements on teaching, based on rigorous self-evaluation, and have effectively tackled any areas of weakness.

Class teams meet regularly to review the learning and progress of their pupils. You are developing the way you assess and track pupils' progress across the school in English, mathematics and science. Your new system ensures the greater involvement of subject leaders in identifying which pupils need targeted support and, subsequently, supporting their colleagues to achieve this.

You continue to offer a curriculum that is personalised to meet the needs of all learners. From the early years to post-16, you are constantly seeking ways to adapt the curriculum and identify new learning opportunities. Since the last inspection, you have set up the Newman Additional Resource (NAR) for pupils with significant and complex learning needs. This is going from strength to strength. Pupils within this provision have typically been out of school for long periods and have experienced low self-esteem. You quickly establish trusting and positive relationships with the young people, secure full-time attendance and set high expectations for their learning.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of your school. They praise all staff, from the Reception team to school leaders. Parents could not speak highly enough about the support they have received. They describe how school staff 'go the extra mile' to support their child, and they describe your school as an 'extended family'. One parent's comment sums this up: 'Staff are amazing – my son wants to go to school every day now; he is even studying for GCSEs – I never thought that would be possible.'

Governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They are knowledgeable about school improvement initiatives. Governors question the effect of additional government funding, such as the Year 7 catch-up grant for literacy and numeracy, robustly. They have an understanding of what is going well in school and what needs to be better.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The well-maintained register of staff pre-employment checks meets all statutory requirements.

You and your staff are knowledgeable about the circumstances that arise which make pupils vulnerable, both in and out of school. Staff training about safeguarding and child protection is extensive and refreshed regularly. Your team of pastoral staff work closely with other agencies to keep pupils safe. You make sure that concerns

about pupils are identified in a timely manner and reported immediately. As a result, prompt and robust action is taken to keep pupils safe and protect them from harm.

Inspection findings

- From the moment pupils enter the school door, they receive high-quality support from staff. Time is given for pupils to be independent. For example, one child on arrival was transferred to her walking aid and was encouraged to walk independently to her lesson. This support continues across the school day, with pupils receiving support in lessons and at breaktimes to be involved in as many aspects of school life as possible. The only exception to this was lunchtime, where there were some missed opportunities to promote pupils' independence.
- Many of your pupils have complex physical and medical needs. Staff fully recognise these needs. However, nothing is seen as too big a barrier and, in your care, pupils thrive and exceed in their learning. For example, children unable to sit up complete their work laid on a bed and feel proud of their achievements.
- Children in the early years quickly make progress from their low starting points. This is because each child is supported well by skilled staff. Staff's development of children's communication and interaction skills is a particular strength. Staff work creatively to find the best ways to engage children, starting with high-interest activities. This builds a solid foundation for their learning and development in key stage 1.
- Pupils in the 14 to 19 department are confident learners. They are ambitious for their future and want to attend college and gain employment. Staff make every effort to ensure that pupils achieve the examinations and qualifications that they are able to. For example, some GCSE subjects are taught over a three-year programme, and pupils enter examinations in a staggered manner. This ensures that pupils leave the school with the best possible outcomes. You have recently widened the courses on offer, allowing pupils to undertake vocational courses and experience the world of work. Staff share your excitement and passion in preparing pupils for further training and employment.
- You use additional funding effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who need help to catch up. You have used this money for targeted support on pupils' language development and, as a result, pupils make significant progress in this area. You also use additional funding to extend the curriculum, for example providing horse riding and music therapy, and you have measured the impact of these areas against pupils' enjoyment and engagement.
- The building poses limitations on how you can effectively organise and deliver the curriculum. Your staff work hard to minimise these limitations by using space creatively and by reviewing pupil groupings. You and your governors are working hard to secure improvements. However, pupils and parents do not see these limitations, and they describe the school as 'a wonderful place to learn'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- embed systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to make sure that they can be clear on the impact of curriculum interventions and support
- develop their support for pupils on the autism spectrum to enable these learners to be as independent as possible
- extend the range of opportunities for young people to develop life and employment skills to prepare them for when they leave school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of governors, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernadette Moorcroft
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and your senior and middle leaders, three representatives from the governing body and one group of pupils. We observed teaching, learning and assessment in lessons along with senior leaders. We looked at the work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning. We considered the results from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 19 written responses from parents. We also considered responses to the staff questionnaire. We examined a range of documents, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' progress.