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Mrs Sue Rademacher
Headteacher
John Chilton School
Bengarth Road
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Dear Mrs Rademacher

Short inspection of John Chilton School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 2018 with Barney Geen, 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Your ambition for all pupils to succeed now and in their young adult lives is shared by leaders, staff and governors alike. Recently, the school community has experienced a difficult time. A period of interim leadership followed the unexpected death of the previous headteacher. Due largely to your drive and determination throughout this time, staff remained focused on meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of the pupils.

You lead a complex school, providing education for pupils with a broad range of needs. Pupils join your school at different ages and points in the school year. Irrespective of when they start, pupils make good progress from that point. This is because leaders have developed an effective multi-disciplinary team approach to teaching and learning. This provides holistically for pupils' physical, social, emotional and educational needs.

Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. They are mindful of the particular challenges of planning to meet both pupils' academic and therapeutic needs. They provide high-quality professional development. This supports staff well in developing relevant skills and knowledge. Staff feel valued and appreciated. They are proud to be part of the school community. You and other leaders have rightly identified the need to further improve and embed assessment systems to support pupils' learning.

Governors fulfil their strategic role effectively. They are well informed about pupils' progress, their safety and well-being. Leaders provide governors with detailed,

analytical reports. Governors' visits help them to see how leaders are carrying out their responsibilities and how pupils are doing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant. They are very aware of the pupils' vulnerabilities and work well as a team to keep them safe from harm. Staff and governors receive training that is current and relevant. They are well informed about new legislation. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. One member of staff told me that 'Safeguarding is embedded in everything we do.'

Leaders are aware of the increased risk to pupils when using electronic communication aids and apps. To minimise risk, leaders provide training for pupils, parents and carers to support safe internet use. Pupils are aware of the risks they may encounter and they know what to do if they have a worry. Parents are reassured about their child's safety, both online and at school.

Leaders support pupils well in developing their awareness of personal safety. Pupils know that the colour-coded lanyard system supports them in keeping safe. One pupil told me that 'red means they haven't been through their safety check'. Pupils feel safe. They told inspectors that bullying does not happen in their school. They said that they would speak to a teacher if they had any worries or concerns.

Governors are tenacious in managing their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive relevant information that tells them about the school's current priorities. They follow up reports from the headteacher with visits to the school to see safeguarding work in action.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to focus on three areas which you identified as demonstrating the impact of your work since the previous inspection.
- First, we considered how well leaders use the agreed assessment systems to secure strong progress for pupils. Leaders have prioritised improvements to assessment in their development plan.
- The framework for the curriculum is strong and distinctive. Leaders took the decision to create the three possible pathways for learning. They make sure that pupils experience the right pathway and that work supports their learning as well as their social and emotional needs. Learning observed across the school exemplified this well.
- The youngest pupils enjoyed listening to the story 'The train ride'. They joined in with gusto because of the way in which the teacher brought the story to life. Out of her special bag came a toy train, a torch, a balloon and even grandma's hat. Pupils took turns to hold and feel these objects. This helped them to recall characters and events in the story.

- In an English lesson for older pupils, learning was reinforced by strong questioning and good modelling. Pupils improved their sentences using 'and', 'because' and 'but'.
- In a music lesson, pupils selected their own percussion instruments and practised playing them. Through skilful teaching, they learned the difference between short and long sounds.
- Opportunities for problem solving are effective. One pupil used a funnel to help pour lentils into a bottle without spilling them. Another pupil discovered how dough can be shaped and embellished to look like a banana or a biscuit.
- Older pupils show increased independence. Pupils choose their lunch using pictorial menus. They indicate their preferences and take turns to deliver the order to the canteen. Some pupils have school-wide responsibilities, such as wheelchair and lift buddies. Having these roles adds to pupils' growing sense of responsibility and independence.
- We saw that the most able pupils are not always given work that challenges them. Pupils of different abilities are sometimes given the same task to do. This means that it can be too easy for some and too hard for others.
- Leaders have developed a clear framework for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Assessment systems using 'I can' statements support planning to meet different learning needs. These systems are not yet embedded well enough to ensure that all pupils, including the most able pupils, make consistently strong progress.
- Next, we looked at the provision for pupils in the sixth form. We wanted to find out how well this provision enables pupils to make progress in their learning and embed their functional skills.
- Leaders rightly identified the need to establish a sixth form in this school. The curriculum has a good balance of academic and functional skills. Students access therapeutic support as required. Staff plan activities to support students into young adulthood. They are age appropriate and relevant for developing independence and skills for life. Students make snacks and meals, identifying and selecting the ingredients they need. They learn to use the washing machine and dryer, selecting the right temperature to use. They learn teamwork, taking on different responsibilities. They ask for help if they need it, knowing that adults encourage them to be as independent as possible.
- This small and relatively new provision is making a real difference to the lives and life chances of this group of students.
- Our third area of focus was on how leaders have responded to recommendations from the previous inspection.
- Leaders have taken positive steps to secure further improvement. A detailed development plan sets out the actions taken, their impact and next steps for further improvement.
- Leaders have further strengthened multi-disciplinary working. This is having a positive impact on the quality of planning for the different learning pathways.

- Improved use of communication systems effectively supports pupils' learning. A team approach to ensuring effective use of electronic communication is adding value.
- Pupils told inspectors how much they appreciated the many clubs and activities, including volleyball, football, art, relaxation, gardening and cooking. These have evolved through leaders' actions to strengthen spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision.
- Parents speak highly of the school and are positive about the progress their children are making, particularly in their physical, social and emotional development. Their responses reflect leaders' work to improve communication between home and school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue their work to embed the assessment systems to support teachers' planning to meet different needs, so that all pupils, including the most able, make consistently strong progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Moon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. We held meetings with senior leaders, governors and the safeguarding committee. We spoke to a representative of the local authority. We met formally with a group of nine pupils, with five members of staff and seven parents. We considered the 51 responses to the staff survey, the 20 responses to Parent View and the 11 responses to the free-text service for parents. We reviewed a range of documents provided by the school, including the development plan, the self-evaluation form and reports to governors. We observed pupils' learning across all year groups. We followed pupils in the three different learning pathways. Known by staff and parents as blue, purple and red pathways, each is planned to meet pupils' specific learning needs. We spoke to pupils about their learning and to staff about their planning and teaching. We looked at a range of pupils' work.