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Mr Christopher Rollings
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rollings

Short inspection of Hadrian School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018 with Zoe Westley, 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 outstanding in March 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

Hadrian School has developed into an exceptional special school as a result of your strong leadership. You and senior leaders have a clear aim to make a difference to the lives of the children that attend the school. The school's motto 'together we make a difference' is demonstrated in the effective partnerships that leaders have developed with parents and carers, the local community, other schools and providers, the local authority and the local NHS foundation trust. These partnerships have enabled the school to achieve strong outcomes for pupils and make a highly valued contribution to the work of other providers.

You lead a strong staff team which has a clear purpose to improve the outcomes for all pupils and their families. This is evident in strong progress that pupils make from different starting points, the nurturing and caring relationships between staff and pupils, the excellent behaviour of pupils and the many positive comments that parents make about the school. Clear and effective teamwork is evident, staff are treated with respect and everyone's contribution to achieving strong pupil outcomes is valued.

Staff have developed a very close partnership with parents and carers who value the school very highly. Leaders understand that parents have a very important role in their child's education and development. You have put this at the centre of your work, and staff provide regular training for parents and carers to develop their

parenting skills. As a result, there has been an improvement in pupil outcomes, pupils' behaviour and parental engagement.

Leaders have successfully developed systems to describe pupils' progress, based on their different starting points, that are accessible and easily understood by parents. Parents value the different ways that staff communicate with them, whether this is through home-school diaries, the termly 'Hadrian Herald' newsletter, achievement assemblies or regular progress meetings.

Parents spoke of the support that they receive, and that staff were always there to listen. Many parents report that the school has transformed their child's life and speak highly of your leadership. All the parents that completed the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, reported that their child is safe at school, are making good progress and are well looked after. All the parents that completed the survey would recommend the school to another parent.

Leaders have developed a clear rationale for the school's curriculum based on professional enquiry and research about pupils' educational, social and emotional needs. As a result, staff have reviewed the curriculum and developed learning programmes for children with different starting points. Leaders have responded positively and promptly to the changes in the revised SEN Code of Practice. For each pupil, learning outcomes are clearly linked to targets in their education, health and care plan and, where appropriate, include targets from the school-based therapy teams.

The curriculum emphasises the development of pupils' communication skills. This was evident through the introduction of a 'communication champion' for each class, the effective use of signing by staff and pupils, and the use of symbols, photographs and objects of reference to support learning, record-keeping and assessment. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and includes sensory and therapeutic programmes for those with the most complex needs. The curriculum is enriched through numerous educational visits, sporting activities and pupils' involvement in a wide range of cultural activities such as music, dance and drama. Staff and pupils were proud of their recent involvement in a national Shakespeare project. Pupils' learning is enriched through the school's extended curriculum offer. Pupils and their families value highly the breakfast club, lunchtime and after-school clubs, the Saturday activity club and the school summer playscheme.

Staff are very knowledgeable about the needs of each pupil. Teachers have good subject knowledge, outcomes are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, teaching assistants and support staff work effectively with individuals and groups and there is strong teamwork. Pupils are confident and curious learners, they enjoy school, are encouraged to work independently, they behave safely, understand the need to have school rules and have awareness of the needs of others. The school council organised a pop-up café to raise money for the homeless. Pupils are well prepared to move to their secondary school. They talk confidently about this change and they, and their parents, are supported effectively through an extensive, well-established and personalised transition programme.

Under your leadership, the school has developed as a regional centre for training and professional development. When we visited, you were days away from the opening of a facility that will enable the school's training programme to be developed even further. Specialist training will be offered to other schools in the region and the parents and carers of the pupils who attend Hadrian School. Your strong commitment to both staff development, and their well-being, results in low staff turnover.

Staff report that they are happy and very proud to work at Hadrian School, that they have confidence in senior leaders, feel well supported and consider that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support staff development. Staff say that they are treated with respect and consider that leaders are interested in their well-being. Staff and parents describe the school as a family.

Governors have established close links with the school. Leaders provide governors with detailed information about the school's performance. Governors are regular visitors to school and support and challenge the headteacher and senior leaders effectively. Governors work closely and effectively with the senior leaders to evaluate the school's work and identify priorities for development.

Leaders have started to work closely with the local authority and other providers to respond effectively to the local authority's review of the placement of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN). Leaders and governors understand that the school needs to continue to develop to meet the needs of an increasing number of pupils who have complex special educational needs, including those with life-limiting conditions. You understand that the roles and responsibilities of all staff, including the leadership team, need to be reviewed to ensure that the school is able to respond effectively to these changes. Your clear thinking about the curriculum, the work of the leadership team and your innovative approach to staff development have enabled the school to respond promptly and successfully to the needs of pupils. As a result, the school is well placed to continue to grow from strength to strength.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have created a strong and effective safeguarding culture where pupils' safety and well-being are paramount. The systems to safeguard pupils are robust and are monitored rigorously by leaders. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly, and staff and governors are knowledgeable as a result of regular safeguarding training which is given a high priority. Leaders provide strong leadership to staff; they respond quickly to concerns and are confident to challenge other agencies to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.

Inspection findings

- You are a dedicated leader who puts the needs and welfare of pupils and their families at the centre of your work. You have created a strong leadership team which has the vision and ambition to continue the school's strong record of

innovation and school improvement.

- Leaders have established a robust safeguarding culture. As a result, pupils feel safe. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional; there are respectful relationships between pupils and with staff. There is effective multi-agency working and leaders take prompt and decisive action to secure pupils' safety.
- Leaders have kept the school's curriculum and assessment systems under review to ensure strong outcomes for all pupils. Pupils are well supported with the development of their communication and independence skills and are well prepared for their move to secondary school.
- Leaders have established strong systems to support the professional development of all staff. As a result, staff are able to meet the needs of all pupils effectively, including the increasing number of those with complex special educational needs.
- Governors and leaders have taken effective action to address the area for improvement identified in the previous inspection. A detailed analysis of the use of pupil premium funding is published on the school website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in the context of the changing needs of pupils, the roles and the responsibilities of senior and middle leaders are reviewed to ensure that the outcomes for all learners continue to be good or better
- the school works effectively in partnership with other providers to support the implementation of the local authority's SEN and disabilities review.

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

Yours sincerely

George Gilmore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, your deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held separately with two parents, and three governors. I spoke to the local authority's school improvement partner. Inspectors visited lessons with school leaders and scrutinised pupils' work. An inspector spoke to a group of pupils from the school council; in addition, we spoke with pupils in class and at breaktime and lunchtime. Inspectors

scrutinised school documents, including information about pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, behaviour and attendance records, information about safeguarding and the records of governing body meetings. We took account of 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well 86 staff responses to Ofsted's staff survey.