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Mr Bob Law
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Law

Short inspection of Goldwyn School

Following my visit to the school on 7 December 2017 with Andrew Hogarth, 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 June 2014.

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 rightly proud to lead a school which has a strong ethos of nurture, fosters pupils' creativity and celebrates individual achievements.

The school's reputation has continued to grow, it is now a well-regarded teaching school with an outreach service supporting over 60 mainstream and special schools. Your role as a national leader of education has ensured that you have played a key part in improving the learning of hundreds of pupils who have special educational needs. The school's leading role is set to continue, as a founder member of the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust, a cooperative trust shared with other Kent schools.

Since the previous inspection you have opened two additional provisions, Goldwyn Plus and Goldwyn Folkestone, for pupils with challenging needs. Many of these pupils have been excluded from their previous schools. Your continued drive and commitment has ensured that these additional provisions have been carefully integrated into the Goldwyn philosophy.

The school is committed to inclusion. You ensure that pupils who previously have been excluded, secluded or disengaged have the chance to reach their full potential. This has recently been recognised by a major national organisation and the school has received a centre of excellence award.

Parents cannot praise the school highly enough. All who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. Typical comments included: 'Goldwyn has saved my child's education, his life has been completely turned around, he is interested in what is being taught and feels understood by the staff.' Parents said that they are now confident about their children's futures as a result of them attending this school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff, leaders and governors are unstinting in their efforts to keep pupils safe from harm. They are well aware of pupils' vulnerabilities and provide sensitive and caring support. Staff share important information on a regular basis to ensure that each pupil receives the help they need. They have excellent links with a range of therapists who provide high-quality specialist support.

Staff are extremely well trained, for example they have an excellent understanding of the signs of self-harming or abuse. Parents, staff and pupils express no concerns about bullying, saying that bullying is not an issue at the school. All pupils, when asked, said that they felt safe at this school.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and meticulously kept.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to examine how effectively leadership has monitored the school since the previous inspection. The rigour of your monitoring has ensured that all aspects of the school have continued to improve. You have successfully implemented your highly effective leadership and management structures at the additional provisions. This has ensured that at all three locations you provide a consistently excellent standard of education.
- During the inspection we checked how well the governing body holds the school to account. We found that governors are a highly experienced group of individuals who provide excellent challenge and support to the school. They are able to fulfil their role so well due to the outstanding quality of detailed information you provide, such as that relating to the progress and attainment of pupils.
- One area of focus we explored was the attendance of pupils. This is because published data indicates that some pupils were not attending well. We found that nearly a third of pupils have significant medical conditions which have a negative impact on their attendance. Additionally, many pupils at your school have had lengthy periods of out of education prior to attending your school, indeed some pupils have not previously attended school at all. Staff already work hard with parents and external agencies to ensure that once a pupil starts at your school their attendance improves rapidly. Leaders aim to further develop the parental outreach programme so that they can engage more with 'hard-to-reach' families.
- We checked how well teaching ensures that pupils make strong progress.

Teachers know the pupils well. When pupils arrive at your school, teachers make extremely accurate assessments of pupils' specific needs, they then provide work that helps pupils to very quickly make the next step in their learning. Evidence seen during the inspection showed that pupils typically make exceptional progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils say that they do well because the teachers, 'care about us here' and 'make our lessons interesting'. During the inspection pupils were seen to be absorbed in the activities provided, for example in design technology pupils were seen totally engrossed in refining their woodwork skills.

- The curriculum that you provide is exceptional and has a highly positive effect on pupils' personal and academic development. Parents are delighted with the range of subjects that you provide, including two modern foreign languages. Pupils are able to study over 20 national qualifications from entry level to GCSE. In music and drama, for example, you not only provide opportunities for pupils to play instruments and sing, but you also provide back-stage opportunities such as lighting and music technology. All of these activities lead to accreditations and have inspired past pupils to pursue college courses and careers in these subjects.
- It is clear that you have high aspirations. Those who are most able in specific subjects have the opportunity to shine at your school. For example, in art most-able pupils produced imaginative paintings and models for their GCSE qualifications.
- We checked how well the school prepares pupils for the next stage of their lives. We found that you and your team care passionately about giving pupils the best life chances. Most pupils leave your school with an impressive range of accreditations. All past pupils that you have been able to contact have gone into further education, training or employment. This is because your careers education is excellent. For example, your vocational programme gives pupils first-rate skills in construction, carpentry and electrical installation.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further develop the school's parental engagement programme to engage more with hard-to-reach families.

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

Yours sincerely

Liz Bowes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority. We visited all three of the school's sites, Goldwyn Ashford, Goldwyn Plus and Goldwyn Folkestone. Discussions were held with pupils at all locations. We took into consideration the 21 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. We considered 33 responses to the staff questionnaires. Together we visited classes and looked at pupils' books. A range of school documentation was checked, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; assessment, behaviour and exclusions information; the single central record of pre-employment checks; and policies and procedures and minutes of governors' meetings.