

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Pauline Hilling-Smith  
Lighthouse School Leeds  
Arthington House  
Hospital Lane  
Cookridge  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS16 6QB

Dear Mrs Hilling-Smith

### **Short inspection of Lighthouse School Leeds**

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017 with Michael Wardle 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 good in March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education. Your school is clearly putting its motto, 'inspiring bright futures', into practice. Leaders and governors have created a clear vision that emphasises pupils' destinations when they leave. This has established a shared understanding of expectations for staff and pupils. Leaders promote high aspirations with regard to conduct and achievement. Pupils aim high and follow individualised pathways towards their desired destinations. Pupils gain substantially in confidence during their time at the school.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a robust assessment process to track pupils' progress. Progress is good across the curriculum, and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium make as much progress as others. Staff have strong knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs. They tailor support to help pupils reach their intended destinations.

Leaders have created a positive climate throughout the school so pupils enjoy learning and being creative. Staff are proud of their school and feel well supported by senior leaders. The environment reflects the high expectations of leaders and supports the sensory needs of the pupils.

Leaders have reviewed and improved the systems for checking the quality of teaching. Senior leaders identify strengths and areas for development accurately.

Since the last inspection, teaching has improved so that pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Staff work together to share ideas and discuss strategies to support pupils' needs. Regular training, specific to the needs of the pupils, ensures that staff understand the pupils. As a result, teachers adapt their planning and provide learning programmes that match pupils' different needs. Leaders are aware that teaching is not as strong in all subjects, for example science and mathematics, and are taking action to address this by appointing another specialist teacher.

You, and the other school leaders, are ambitious and expect the very best in pastoral support and outcomes for pupils. You are clear about what you want the school to achieve for pupils and have extended the range of qualifications. There are a wide range of vocational options and extensive work experience opportunities. However, leaders do not identify well enough the impact they want developments to have and this makes it difficult for them to check the success of their actions.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. The record of pre-employment checks is kept up to date and regularly checked by the governor with responsibility for safeguarding.

There is a culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils talk animatedly about how the school helps to keep them safe. Pupils understand the added complexities of having autism and learn how to keep themselves physically and emotionally safe.

Staff training around safeguarding is thorough, and includes regular updates. Procedures and policies are robust. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils. Leaders have created a strong system for supporting vulnerable pupils and working with parents. The school has well-established routines and support processes to help pupils attend regularly. Attendance is strong.

Parents' responses on the online survey, Parent View, show that parents feel their children are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and governors are proud of the school and the improvements made since the last inspection. Staff talked confidently about the four 'cornerstones' of the provision being: pupils' well-being, speech and language development, the curriculum, and skills and experiences on offer, with long-term destinations being the thread to pull them together. For pupils, these aspects are reflected in their school 'passports' which bring together their interests, their needs and the effective provision the school makes for them as individuals.
- The school has increased the number of pupils on roll and now has some students aged 16 to 19. These students follow an individualised programme to develop their work and social skills and to gain academic accreditation. They are

given a wide range of work experience opportunities that reflect what they want to do when they leave school.

- Leaders have also developed the provision for pupils in key stage 4. Leaders are very active in securing appropriate work placements and experiences for pupils, and a wider range of accreditation options. Pupils are ambitious and have clear plans for what they want to do in the future, including independent living and work. Their chosen destinations help to shape the provision.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps because they have clear goals, supported by careers guidance, appropriate accreditation outcomes and a range of experiences to support their personal development. Pupils gain confidence over time to articulate their ambitions.
- Most pupils make good progress from typically low starting points. Progress is particularly strong in English. Leaders set high expectations for progress by setting 'flight paths' taking into account pupils' abilities on entry to the school, which ensures that appropriate qualifications are entered. Academic progress is tracked alongside progress in personal development and attitudes to learning, to identify quickly where extra support may be needed.
- The assessment system is robust and ensures that pupils make progress towards the targets set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Leaders use the information to show how, over time, pupils become more resilient, and maintain knowledge and understanding more effectively, the longer they have been at the school. However, assessment is not yet as effective in science as it is in other subjects.
- Inspectors' observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils make good progress in most subjects. They enjoy lessons and attend well. The communication and sensory needs of pupils are properly assessed and, as a result, all staff know how to adapt lessons appropriately. There are clear processes for pupils who need time to reflect before continuing with learning. In many lessons, teachers challenge pupils to make even more progress, however this is not yet consistent in all subjects. In mathematics, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to solve problems.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are assessed and self-assess every lesson towards their own personal target and attitude to learning. This sets clear expectations. Pupils all have behaviour plans, which, along with language strategies, support pupils to express themselves appropriately and develop social skills.
- The staff provide a wealth of support for pupils throughout the school day, both in terms of curriculum and well-being. Support is graded and gradually reduced, from 'velcro to invisible', in order to help pupils to become more independent. This means that pupils feel safe and know how to get help. Pupils are involved in improving the school, for example by helping to design the visitors' welcome booklet. Pupils also contribute to the review meetings of their EHC plan, and staff support them to prepare so that their voice is heard.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is strong. Pupils are encouraged to debate issues and consider the needs of other people. For example, pupils

understand that others in their school have different needs and they all play a part in keeping each other safe.

- Training for staff is rigorous and bespoke to the needs of the pupils. Training and strategies are shared so that all pupils can benefit. Specific training is acquired where necessary to meet need, such as on selective mutism.
- The school is supported by speech and language therapists who assess all pupils and provide bespoke training to all staff. As a result, pupils' language skills develop over time and pupils are able to access more of the curriculum independently.
- Leaders and governors know what the priorities are. Leaders' evaluation is accurate and they take action to address any weaknesses found. Evaluation is expansive, but does not shine a bright enough light on the intended specific impact of leaders' actions. The school's plans for improvement are clear in terms of ambition but lack clarity around the intended impact of identified strategies.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently strong in all subjects, especially science and mathematics
- identify the impact that planned improvements should have and clarify what success will look like, so that developments can be evaluated effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Pauline Rowland  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection: how the school has improved its approach and effectiveness in assessment; whether the monitoring activities and staff training have impacted on school developments; what impact the senior leaders have had on school development.

Inspectors carried out a range of activities to explore these areas during the inspection, including: meetings with staff, senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils and governors; observations of lessons; scrutiny of pupils' books; scrutiny of a wide range of school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, governance

and monitoring of the quality of teaching. They took into account the views of parents, pupils and staff and reviewed the school website and policies.