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Mr Mark Leicester
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Dear Mr Leicester

Short inspection of Calderdale PRU

Following my visit to the school on 21 June 2017 with Jo Sharpe 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your secondment to the PRU in September 2015, and formal appointment in September 2016, you have managed the turbulence in staffing and the move into new school buildings successfully. You have melded a more settled team and built their skills in working with pupils who have more complex behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs. Importantly, you have focused resolutely on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make good progress from their starting points no matter how short or long their stay may be. As a result, virtually all pupils in the primary provision move back successfully to mainstream primary or specialist education. Most younger secondary-aged pupils also make successful transitions. Older pupils usually remain with you until the end of key stage 4. The vast majority then move on successfully to education, training or employment.

At the last inspection, the school was required to improve teachers' use of information they have about pupils' abilities to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs and move them on well. You have worked effectively with your senior team to develop a comprehensive assessment system that identifies pupils' starting points on entry against a range of academic, social, behavioural and personal aspects. Teachers usually use this information well to plan activities that are personalised to pupils' specific needs and interests and to tackle any gaps or barriers to their learning. Pupils in the primary provision settle in quickly and thrive. They often

make rapid gains in their learning. Your staff have embraced your vision that all pupils will be able to take a range of GCSE subjects. Higher proportions are achieving these qualifications. The number of pupils gaining five qualifications including GCSEs in English and mathematics has jumped from 9% in 2015 to 29% in 2016. Occasionally, more-able older pupils are not stretched to achieve as well as they should because the work set is not challenging enough.

School leaders were also required to improve some pupils' attendance by developing more creative approaches to get them into school regularly. You, your team and the management committee have tried many ways to address this issue with some success. The majority of pupils improve their attendance compared to their previous attendance in other schools once they settle in. However, this is an ongoing priority and you continue to strive to improve attendance further.

You, the management committee and your senior team have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Action plans are implemented effectively to improve any area that is not as good as it should be. For example, although pupils' workbooks and assessment information show pupils' positive application to their learning, you know that their rate of progress in literacy lags behind that of other subjects. Daily rapid reading lessons and literacy interventions are narrowing gaps effectively, particularly for the small group of girls who attend the school. You and the management committee check the impact of the actions in your action plan regularly. However, there are insufficient measurable targets in the plan to enable the management committee to understand the full impact of your work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records for pupils who are at risk, in need or who have a child protection plan are detailed. Behaviour incidents and incidents that require the physical restraint of pupils are recorded thoroughly and responded to appropriately. Historical administrative weaknesses in record-keeping in recruitment files have been addressed. Current files are in good order and recruitment procedures are robust. You and your team are vigilant in supporting pupils and their families when facing significant challenge in their lives. Staff work closely with a range of agencies to support pupils at risk of harm. Staff child protection training is up to date and in line with recent Department for Education requirements. Staff have a good understanding of how to recognise and respond to any safeguarding concerns. These include risks from extremist or radical views, child sexual exploitation and local concerns such as drugs, knife crime and pupils' sexual health. You seek professional guidance from the local authority's children's social care team or the designated lead for safeguarding immediately when incidents of concern occur.

Inspection findings

- Your work to improve the quality of teaching and teachers' use of assessment information to plan activities matched to pupils' current abilities is having a

positive impact on the progress that pupils are making in lessons. Detailed assessments of pupils' reading, literacy, mathematical, behavioural, social and emotional needs on entry now take place. These assessments, along with information from pupils' previous schools and pupils' and parents' views, provide a very clear picture of pupils' needs and abilities and any gaps in their learning. This information is usually used well by staff to develop activities in lessons that are personalised to pupils' individual requirements. This, together with the improved deployment of teaching assistants and very small class groups, contributes to the generally positive learning atmosphere in classes and the good progress pupils generally make.

- Primary pupils often make rapid gains in their learning. They are enthusiastic and keen to try their best. It is a more mixed picture in the secondary provision. However, overall, books, observations of learning and the regular assessment information show that these pupils usually apply themselves to their learning, are productive in class and make generally good progress. This is due not least to the strong relationships developed between staff and pupils and the strategies staff use to encourage pupils to manage their behaviour and overcome previously poor attitudes to learning. Pupils accept the higher expectations that you have that they will work and achieve as well as pupils in any mainstream school.
- Accurate assessments and the careful way that teachers work with individual pupils mean that they have a good understanding of any gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers usually use this information well to adapt what they are doing to help pupils catch up. Occasionally, the most able pupils ponder on repeated work for too long, slowing the pace of their learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, in line with the school's policy. Such feedback to pupils helps them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work further.
- In recent years, the behaviour of pupils arriving at the PRU has been much more complex and challenging. This is particularly the case for older pupils who have had a series of moves or exclusions from previous schools across the local area. Over a third of the pupils on roll currently have arrived since January. Staff have been trained to meet the mental health needs of pupils more effectively. This training and the more systematic and consistent approach to managing behaviour are helping to ensure that the behaviour of most pupils improves once they settle into school.
- Many actions have been taken to improve pupils' attendance, and to some success. Actions include providing transport for pupils who live some distance from the PRU and key workers going out to homes and bringing pupils into school. You have been much more robust in taking parents who condone their child's absence to court. You also work closely with education welfare services, the youth offending team, social services and the police to have a holistic approach to meeting the needs of some of the pupils with very complex behaviour. Collectively, this work is improving pupils' attendance rates. You know that there is still more to do to ensure that attendance improves further, particularly for the few reluctant learners who do not come to school regularly enough.
- Significant work is undertaken to ensure the effective promotion of pupils'

personal, social, moral and cultural development. This includes work to help pupils understand how to keep safe from social media, risky behaviours and dangers in the local community. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum, tutor time and visitors to school help pupils to gain a strong understanding of current affairs, democracy, the rule of law, right and wrong, and empathy and respect for others. They gain a good understanding of a range of world faiths and cultures, and learn about respect for others and those who have viewpoints and lifestyles different from their own. Derogatory language is not tolerated and is stamped on immediately. Staff are vigilant in anticipating and then de-escalating highly charged emotional or behavioural situations. Records of incidents of poor behaviour are carefully tracked and analysed to check that incidents are reducing over time. Restorative work takes place when more serious incidents occur. Behaviour management is good and this ensures that a positive climate for learning is established.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action plans contain measurable targets against which members of the management committee can check the impact of the school's work more thoroughly
- they develop further strategies to improve the attendance of the most reluctant pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team met with you, senior leaders, staff and three representatives of the management committee. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority's school effectiveness service. Inspectors visited a range of lessons on all three school sites. I visited some lessons with you to observe learning and behaviour and to review pupils' workbooks. Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime. A range of documents were scrutinised, including the school's written evaluation of its work, documents relating to the school's safeguarding procedures, pupils' progress information, behaviour records and the most recent headteacher's reports to the management committee.