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Mr Paa-King Maselino  
Headteacher  
The Helix Education Centre  
94 Uxbridge Road  
Harrow  
Middlesex  
HA3 6DH

Dear Mr Maselino

### **Short inspection of The Helix Education Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 2018 with Helen Bailey, 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 November 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You have continued to help pupils learn and develop.

The pupil referral unit covers two sites and a home education service. The Helix Education Service provides education for pupils who are not able to attend their mainstream school. Those attending the main site have either been permanently excluded or are placed at the service to avoid permanent exclusion. The home education service makes provision for pupils who have illnesses which prevent them attending school. You also oversee the running of the Hospital School. However, most of these pupils remain on the roll of their mainstream school. Many of the Year 11 pupils at the main site make appropriate use of alternative provision to prepare them for the next stage in their education.

As headteacher you continue to oversee the development of the service since the last inspection, and have successfully managed a move to the new site, minimising the disruption to the pupils' learning.

A new deputy headteacher has been appointed. Together you provide effective leadership. You and your wider leadership team have overseen the expansion of the service and worked to ensure that the ethos is consistent and evident, both at the main site and in the home-based provision. You have worked closely with the local authority and the management board to extend the provision the service makes.

The Hospital School is well focused on the very specific needs of the pupils. It

makes provision for pupils in need of inpatient care. Pupils in this provision are well supported to achieve positive outcomes in both their academic achievement and their social and emotional well-being.

A feature of your work that you are rightly proud of is the access that pupils have to alternative provision. Leaders and management board members are committed to ensuring that pupils are provided with a high-quality education matched to their needs and which prepares them for the next stage of their education.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

A strong culture of safeguarding is evident across the two settings. Safeguarding procedures extend to thoroughly checking on all the alternative provision used by the school. Leaders and the management board have ensured that safeguarding systems and procedures are fit for purpose. They are clear about their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Regular training for staff ensures that the well-being and safety of the pupils is paramount. On each of the sites, pupils say that they feel safe. Parents who spoke to the inspectors and who responded to the questionnaire said that they feel that their children are safe at school. Leaders make sure that all the required checks take place when recruiting staff and employing supply staff.

Leaders are aware that pupils attending the school are particularly vulnerable. You and other leaders have ensured that staff are aware of the specific risks that these groups are exposed to. The school works well with other relevant professionals to address any safeguarding issues identified in the community. Individual cases are discussed with staff on a regular basis.

### **Inspection findings**

- At our initial meeting we agreed to look at how effective actions taken have been in securing improved attendance for pupils. This was because this was an area for improvement in the previous inspection report and attendance figures remain low.
- The school is using reward trips to encourage attendance. For some pupils these have had a significant impact. For example, one pupil's attendance increased from 50% to 100% within a term and remained above 80% for the rest of the year.
- Regular attendance, non-attendance and punctuality are systematically monitored. The inspectors were shown clear case studies which indicate improved attendance and punctuality for some pupils.
- The school works well with parents. At induction parents are provided with an overview of the school's policy. The school has a systematic process for sending letters to parents. Where parents engage with the school there is a clear record of improved attendance.
- Data is used well to inform the school's practice and conversations between professionals. Despite this, authorised absence is still reported as extremely high.
- We also looked at what actions leaders are taking to ensure that the curriculum is

helping pupils to achieve well, taking into account their different needs and abilities.

- At all settings – the main school, the home tuition service and the hospital school – the staff meet regularly to plan pupils' learning.
- Transition to mainstream is carefully planned by a range of agencies and supported by the school's transition support workers.
- Thorough systems are in place to ensure that practice is consistent while allowing different approaches when needed to address the needs of specific groups.
- Staff liaise with the schools pupils are coming from to ensure that they have the right information to support the pupils' learning when they enter the service. All of these factors support the delivery of a curriculum matched to the pupils' needs.
- Governors receive regular reports on the curriculum and assessment and understand the issues well.
- Inspectors visited lessons and the quality of delivery of the curriculum observed was variable. The work of the education support workers was inconsistent in supporting the curriculum.
- We additionally agreed to look at the school's processes and procedures for assessing and tracking pupil-progress areas.
- Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are assessed when they first arrive at the school, highlighting their strengths and areas for development. Pupils are involved in the initial and ongoing assessments, which results in them engaging with the learning.
- Barriers to learning are discussed and any concerns are acted upon.
- These strategies ensure that the school has an effective assessment and tracking process which supports teachers to finely tune the learning to individual needs.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- education support workers are fully prepared and engaged in supporting the curriculum using consistent approaches to behaviour and support
- they refine the analysis of attendance data to ensure consistent highlighting of concerns.

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

Yours sincerely

Penny Barratt

**Ofsted Inspector**

**Information about the inspection**

The inspectors carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of the management board and a representative from the local authority
- joint visits to classrooms with the headteacher and deputy headteacher
- scrutiny of the school's assessment procedures
- a review of the school's analysis of attendance information
- informal discussions with parents
- a review of responses to Ofsted's questionnaires, including the parent, staff and pupil questionnaires
- scrutiny of documents, including the school's development plan, safeguarding information and records, and data on pupils' achievement and attendance, the single central register and a review of safeguarding files
- a review of the school's website.