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Mrs Louise Stanton  
Headteacher  
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Lincolnshire  
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Dear Mrs Stanton

### **Short inspection of Gosberton House Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 21 May 2019 with Damien Turrell, 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 predecessor school was judged to be outstanding in October 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection of the predecessor school. In your role as principal, you have successfully developed a 'children first' culture, in which all pupils are encouraged to do their best. This is an inclusive school where pupils feel valued. Parents, carers, staff and pupils all commented on your determination to meet the needs of all pupils and in securing strong outcomes for pupils. A typical parental comment was 'the school is a lifesaver – it has changed our family's life', stating the positive impact the academy has had. In partnership with the vice-principals and the Lincolnshire Education Trust, you have created a strong leadership team, enabling staff to remain skilled in maintaining an outstanding level of education for all learners.

The learning environment, including the relax rooms, classrooms and outdoor spaces, has been carefully planned and is greatly appreciated by children, pupils and parents. The academy is an inspiring place to learn. Pupils enjoy the wide variety of resources available to them, appreciating the opportunity to play and learn during social times.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's many strengths and further areas for development. Governors and the chief executive officer of the trust visit the school regularly and have a range of skills which enable them to provide excellent challenge and support. All aspects of the school development plan are monitored carefully through governors' visits and meetings. Staff and leaders appreciate the wide range of training provided. They also engage in self-evaluation within which they consider the effectiveness and impact of school improvement on pupils' outcomes.

Extensive systems for staff development and impactful research projects sponsored by the trust play an ongoing role in the school's success in continually improving standards. Staff induction processes are thorough, with mentors providing support to those who need it. Support staff receive regular updates and training, which ensure that they are effective in the classroom. Teaching assistants were observed providing pupils with very effective tailored support in the classroom.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are extremely positive across the school. Pupils have a range of responsibilities, and the pupil council plays an important role in school life. Pupils display good manners and politeness. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said bullying is very rare or non-existent. Discussions with parents and the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, support this view. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work well during lessons; for example, pupils selected new words using a dictionary to produce exciting written work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils are confident and appreciate the ways in which leaders and staff ensure that Gosberton House Academy is a safe and happy school. Pupils are aware of the dangers of the internet and spoke about how they are taught to keep themselves safe on the internet. Parents were confident that the school works successfully to ensure their children's physical and emotional well-being.

Staff receive regular safeguarding updates. Safeguarding policies are up to date, and record-keeping is thorough. The checks made on the appointment of staff are wide ranging and updated regularly. Any concerns the school might have are recorded on electronic systems and followed up when necessary.

Leaders, including governors and the trust, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are securely maintained and are fit for purpose. Staff are highly vigilant about pupils' safety, and leaders are resolute in this. Leaders liaise well with external agencies to provide the best outcomes for the pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- For this inspection, a number of lines of enquiry were agreed. The first line of enquiry was to examine the progress made since the last inspection, when the predecessor school was judged to be outstanding. Despite outstanding progress over time, you have continued to secure improvements in the curriculum and how it is taught. You have secured an outstanding level of education for pupils through the relentless development of the quality of teaching, clearly focused school improvement plans and staff development programmes.
- Leaders have put in place effective strategies, such as using results from accreditation in partnership with external agencies, to improve the quality of the tracking of pupils' progress towards reaching their education, health and care plan targets. This has resulted in pupils making outstanding progress towards the targets set for their social and emotional development. In addition, pupils

continue to benefit from the latest developments in education, thanks to the drive and determination of the principal.

- All pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points at Gosberton House Academy. Leaders use effective assessment systems to ensure that pupils' progress remains at the forefront of thinking at all times. Assessment is moderated across local special schools in order to promote accuracy of leaders' judgements. Inspectors agree with school leaders that they need to further refine their assessment systems in order to track more closely the progress of learners in all subjects. Governors make good use of their meeting time, dedicating at least 50% of this discussing pupils' progress. Parents value the quality of education their children receive and appreciate being kept regularly informed of their progress. They would recommend the school to others.
- The school's continuing outstanding performance has been achieved partly through governors and the trust holding leaders rigorously to account, supporting and challenging in equal measure. The principal is unrelenting in her pursuit of best practice for all. This enables the school to be constantly fine-tuning an already outstanding school. Staff have extensive knowledge of how pupils with additional needs learn and share best practice across the trust, regionally and nationally. Staff receive outstanding continuing professional development, which ensures that pupils benefit from the latest developments in the education of young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- I also checked how good standards were in English and mathematics. The academy promotes independence and lifelong learning, with a strong focus on learners acquiring knowledge in English and mathematics. Highly personalised learning activities are exceptionally well matched to pupils' needs. The use of effective questioning and teachers' secure subject knowledge further promote outstanding outcomes. The broad curriculum and excellent use of resources give learners every opportunity to succeed. Inspectors' analysis of pupils' work shows they develop their knowledge and skills in writing across the curriculum.
- Pupils demonstrated a genuine love of learning. 'I like coming to school' and 'I really like doing the work' were typical comments given by pupils, who were confident and knowledgeable learners. They behave well, knowing their human rights and being encouraged to make the right choices. Staff are clearly trusted by pupils, whose progress is carefully plotted by teachers, leaders, including governors, and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average for similar schools and the school has effective systems in place to promote attendance. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to secure the best outcomes for pupils, who benefit significantly from the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders are able to evidence the strong progress made by pupils in all areas of the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jason Brooks  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, the inspectors spoke with you, the vice-principals, subject leaders and some support staff. I met with the chief executive officer for the trust and a number of governors, including the chair of the governing body. You and the vice-principal joined inspectors on visits to classrooms, where we looked at pupils' work. Inspectors completed a work scrutiny and spoke with pupils and staff throughout the day. The team observed pupils in lessons, before school and at social times and considered the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

I analysed school documentation, including the school development plan, the review of the school's effectiveness and information related to safeguarding and pupils' progress.