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8 July 2019

Mrs Jennifer Grotier  
Headteacher  
Shorefields School  
Ogilvie House  
114 Holland Road  
Clacton-on-Sea  
Essex  
CO15 6HF

Dear Mrs Grotier

### **Short inspection of Shorefields School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 2019 with Fyfe Johnston, 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 October 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff have the very highest aspirations for the children and young people who attend your school. Together with your leadership team, you have continued to develop your outstanding practice. You have created a culture where both staff and pupils expect to be challenged to do their very best. Pupils flourish within a culture of mutual trust and respect.

The positive relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength. It is evident that all staff know the pupils really well. The skills that they possess, in terms of understanding and being able to cater for the increased complex medical needs of the pupils, are fundamental to the success of the school. This, combined with the passion, enthusiasm and commitment that all staff have to ensure that every child is challenged, motivated and engaged in their learning, mean that all pupils are challenged to do their very best. As a result, the progress pupils make from their starting points is excellent.

Parents and carers on the whole are extremely supportive of the school. They particularly appreciate the support they receive from your learning link advisers and the way in which you endeavour to make sure therapeutic needs are met both at home and at school. I shared with you the concerns that some parents raised about

the transition arrangements for their child when moving on to new classes or working with new staff in the next academic year as they had established close relationships with the staff and were anxious about change.

Governance is strong. Governors are committed to ensuring that the school continues to provide an outstanding quality of education for the pupils and they possess the skills, knowledge and understanding to hold you and other leaders to close account. They offer appropriate support and challenge and they know what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve further. Governors have played a significant role in maintaining the very high standards in the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The health and safety of all of the pupils are paramount and this is evident from the policies and procedures in place to ensure that staff know how to keep children safe and address their care needs. All staff attend dedicated training in child protection at the beginning of each academic year. Their skills and knowledge are updated at regular intervals throughout the year. In addition, the school's induction procedures for new staff have safeguarding and child protection at their core. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.

Referrals are made promptly and leaders liaise very well with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils access the support to which they are entitled. Record keeping is thorough and careful checks are made on visitors and staff. The site is a very safe and stimulating learning environment that has been well adapted to meet the complex needs of the pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since the last inspection, you and your leadership team have completely revised the way in which you assess and demonstrate the progress that individual pupils make. Staff teams use both the long- and short-term outcomes identified in education, health and care (EHC) plans to track both the academic and non-academic progress that each individual pupil makes. Staff teams are accountable for tracking the individual progress of the pupils, capturing 'wow' moments and using a commercial package to compile photographic evidence of progress made over time. This has meant that they are able to adapt the curriculum on offer and put in place appropriate and timely interventions if needed.
- This increased focus on meeting EHC plan targets has led to a constant drive to ensure that the curriculum each pupil receives is tailored to meet their individual needs. As a result, adaptations are made and developed where needed. Planning is very responsive, on a session-by-session basis, to the needs and abilities of individuals. Teachers are very creative in the way in which they plan tasks that capture the pupils' interests and motivate them.
- Developing pupils' communication is pivotal to pupils' progress and clearly shared across all staff and other professionals. Staff were observed modelling the good use of spoken English and using signing and symbols well. The extensive use of

augmentative devices supports teaching and learning and provides curriculum access and motivation to all pupils. Pupils were observed using eye-gaze, which really enabled them to make choices, make their views known and understood, and really have a 'voice'.

- The professional development programme for all staff ensures that the pupils' health and safety needs are met. Whole-school training has ensured that priorities identified in the school's development plan are addressed. Staff have benefited from visiting other schools and providers linked to their own individual performance management targets. As a result, they have been able to share good practice and use a range of different strategies in their own teaching.
- Independence is promoted as much as possible from the moment the children start in early years. This is evident from the way the pupils are able to follow their own timetables and choose their preferred activities. Pupils in the college follow appropriate accredited courses and are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Almost all pupils move on to further education or training and we discussed how useful it would be to continue tracking how sustainable these placements are for at least two years.
- Travel training is also provided for those pupils who are able to benefit. The school now has a much higher profile in the local community as a result of the 'out and about' sessions that form part of the college curriculum. All pupils are very well supported in gaining essential life skills. The impressive range of work-experience opportunities and the college café give pupils ample opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a meaningful way.
- The skills and expertise of the staff teams and the teamwork between school and medical staff are evident across the school. As a result, all pupils, despite the intensity of medical input they require and at whatever their life stage or expected life span, can receive access to appropriate and effective education. The way in which sensory needs and healthcare needs are integrated into classroom practice and the way in which pupils are treated with dignity and respect are extremely impressive. This has a very positive impact on pupils' engagement and motivation.
- The behaviour of the pupils in all classes observed and around the school is excellent. Pupils are polite, friendly and inquisitive. There is a very calm and welcoming atmosphere in the school and staff are very skilled in pre-empting any potential negative behaviours. There is a consistent approach across the school as all staff are all trained to manage any challenging behaviours. There has been a reduction in the need for staff to use positive handling techniques. Behaviour support plans that are agreed with parents are in place for the small minority of pupils who continue to exhibit challenging behaviours.
- At 88%, attendance is low compared with national figures, but unsurprising given the needs of the pupils, many of whom have life-threatening conditions. There is clear evidence of how rigorously the school tracks and monitors the attendance of any pupil whose attendance is below 90%. The school's link learning advisers make home visits alongside other professionals to ensure support and education are available. The paediatrician, wheelchair service and orthodontist hold in-school clinics so that pupils do not need time off to attend appointments.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they survey parents' views more frequently in order to address any concerns in a timely manner.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Walker  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors held meetings with you and your leadership team, your school business manager, your multi-disciplinary team, careers leader, a local authority representative, five governors and a group of parents. Inspectors made visits to lessons with senior leaders and looked at pupils' files and books. They talked to pupils informally about their learning and school experiences.

They also scrutinised school documents, including the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, safeguarding records, policies and procedures, behaviour and attendance records, and minutes of governors' meetings. The views of parents from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the school's own parent and pupil surveys were reviewed. Responses from the 84 respondents to the online staff survey were also considered.