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Jennifer Grotier
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Grotier

Ofsted visit to Shorefields School

Following my visit with Marc White, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 October 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to you as the headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead. We also spoke to the two deputy headteachers, the school nurse and your behaviour leader. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full

education for pupils, following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- The school opened to pupils on 8 September 2020 for four days per week. From 28 September 2020, the school opened to pupils for five days per week. A small number of pupils are still unable to attend the school site owing to their medical needs.
- Pupils' attendance has been increasing gradually since the start of term, although fewer pupils are attending routinely than they were doing prior to March 2020. Leaders are working with Essex local authority and relevant clinical commissioning groups to support more pupils to be able to return to school.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects that the school offered prior to lockdown. There are gaps in what leaders can provide within some of these subjects currently. In Year 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, practical opportunities in the wider community, such as work experience, are not currently available. Leaders are trying to replicate these aspects of the curriculum on the school site. This is a work in progress. Leaders hope that the national situation will allow them to return to these community activities at some point later in the school year, but there is no certainty in this.
- Since pupils have started returning to school, leaders and staff have invested time in reassessing pupils' academic, social and physical development. This work is still ongoing. Leaders have put in place another transition day, alongside additional sensory reading, literacy and numeracy programmes, to support their ongoing assessment of pupils. Owing to the complex needs of

some pupils, this assessment may take some time. Leaders feel that early indications are that some of these pupils have developed significant gaps in their confidence, communication and physical development. Staff and leaders are bridging these gaps in pupils' development as they present themselves. Leaders are working with external agencies, including physiotherapists, to support this work. They are using additional COVID-19 funding to recruit a speech and language therapist to also support this growing need.

- Leaders are currently delivering a remote curriculum to some pupils, including those who are not yet able to attend the site. There are significant challenges to delivering this remote curriculum to pupils who have complex needs. Leaders feel that the digital equipment that has been delivered to pupils is not in line with their requests and does not meet the needs of pupils. Leaders are concerned that, in the event of a future lockdown, not enough pupils have the right online devices to meet their needs so that they can access the curriculum remotely.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

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

Kim Pigram
Her Majesty's Inspector