

# Shorefields School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115471
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311942
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Lemon

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	91
6th form	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Rowlen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jo Hodges
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	114 Holland Road Clacton-on-sea Essex CO15 6HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255424412
<b>Fax number</b>	01255475938

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<b>Age group</b>	3–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties and a few, in addition, have autism spectrum disorders. There are many pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and a high proportion of these pupils have complex medical needs. A few pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The attainment of almost all pupils on entry is well below average.

Shorefields School opened as one of the local authority's New Model Special Schools in September 2005 to develop innovative education and multi-agency support to pupils and their families. Shorefields was an amalgamation of two special schools, The Windsor School (severe learning difficulties) and Leas School (moderate learning difficulties). It occupied both sites in its first year but in September 2006, following renovations, it settled on the site of the former Windsor School. This is its first inspection as Shorefields School.

The school is linked with Clacton County High School which is a Performing Arts College and has embarked with Creative Partnerships, a community arts organisation, on developing collaborations with artists and culture groups.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Shorefields is an outstanding school. Leadership and management are excellent. As a result of the headteacher's superb leadership and the substantial support of governors, all of the strengths of the two former schools have been preserved and greatly improved upon. As one of the county's new model special schools, Shorefields is very successfully broadening its range of provision. Links made with schools, colleges and the wide array of supporting agencies have been excellent in extending resources and opportunities for pupils. Furthermore, it gives the school a leading edge in supporting its community and pupils' families. Parents are effusive in praising the school as it meets fully their aspirations for their children's happiness, welfare and achievement. The staff have settled rapidly into a cohesive team. They share a wide range of expertise and experience which caters very effectively for pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorders and moderate learning difficulties. With the help of the headteacher's clear direction, rigorous management and governor's high expectations, staff work hard and extremely effectively in meeting pupils' needs. The many leadership roles they perform provide a coherent and effective response to the demands of all pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities.

Lessons are of a consistently high quality because teaching and learning are excellent. Thorough assessment ensures that teachers and their assistants keep a close check on each pupil's progress. Staff know pupils extremely well as a result, and consequently provide exceptional support that promotes their progress. Moreover, assessment ensures the work planned for each pupil is challenging and matched very closely to their different capabilities. The conditions for pupils to make rapid progress are well established and they achieve outstandingly well as a result. The recent introduction of a system for comparing pupils' progress with that of similar pupils in many other schools is proving very valuable as a critical analysis of progress. It is enabling senior staff to see how much progress pupils are making and where there could be room for improvement. The use of this information is being extended to teachers so that they become skilled in its analysis and can take appropriate steps, where progress may be slower than expected.

An excellent curriculum has makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Work is carefully tailored to match the capabilities and needs of pupils across the whole school. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a tremendous start with provision that focuses closely on all the key areas of learning. The further education department does an exceptional job of preparing students to go onto training, college and employment. They are outstandingly well prepared for future life. Excellent provision for pupils' care and support ensures much is done to keep them all healthy and safe. The curriculum complements this greatly, personal, social, health and citizenship education in particular. Pupils' personal development is exemplary. The high regard they are shown and the respect with which they are treated means pupils' grow in confidence. They tackle very effectively the demands of becoming as independent as possible and do exceedingly well in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Of particular merit is pupils' awareness and regard for the welfare of others. This motivates them to make substantial contributions not only through taking on responsibilities in school but also active involvement in the community and raising money for good causes.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision in the further education department is excellent. As a result, students make exceptional progress in gaining the knowledge, understanding and skills they will need when they leave. The curriculum provides a very broad range of work and activities that are extremely well planned and are of relevance, interest and challenge to students. Students learn really effectively given the many opportunities to engage with and work in the local community. A comprehensive programme of work experience, well-tailored to each student's needs, is exceptional and has been very successful in contributing to student's outstanding preparation for the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage is exceptionally effective and it provides an outstanding education for children. A high standard of teaching and a superb curriculum help children to make the best possible progress in all areas of learning. Activities capture children's imagination and are closely tailored to match their different capabilities. Their personal and social development is excellent. They make fast progress in learning the skills of communication because of the consistent teaching of signing, use of symbols and electronic aids. The outside play area is safe and well equipped. Its use, and the promotion of physical skills, overall, contribute significantly to children's progress in developing early literacy and mathematical skills.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop teacher's skills analysing information on pupils' progress so that they play a full part in supporting pupils whose progress may be slow.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils across the school make excellent progress because their different needs are exceptionally well understood and they are supported exceedingly well and learn very effectively. Pupils' self-confidence and great enjoyment of school means they very willingly participate in work and activities and progress at an exceptional rate. Because work and activities are geared so effectively to what is essential to each pupil's learning, the great majority achieve exceedingly well, even though the standards they attain remain very low due to their severe learning difficulties. Assessments and the tracking of each pupils' performance show the large majority exceed the levels set in their targets. Very few pupils fail to reach their target and in these instances it is related to a medical or other condition. There is no significant variation in achievement according to pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities. The concern arising from the school's analysis of the progress of autism spectrum disorder pupils has been dealt with successfully as very recent assessments show.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils enjoy school thoroughly. While many need to be away occasionally for medical appointments or other unavoidable reasons, attendance is good. Staff get to know each pupil exceedingly well and relationships are particularly strong. As a result, pupils very quickly gain confidence and increase substantially their independence. Pupils are very engaged in the life of the school, contributing really well. They take part in local sports and arts events, raise funds for many good causes including sponsoring the education of a child living in Africa. The school council plays a very purposeful part in how the school caters for pupils. The council decided on physical education resources for wheelchair users and it helped organise a jumble sale.

Pupils behave well, although very occasionally a pupil will act in a way that could upset others. Overall, pupils keep themselves safe and healthy in exemplary ways. They have the awareness and confidence to question visitors. Pupils help in planning healthier school meals and make sensible use of the school grounds.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are planned thoroughly using, in particular, exceptionally good assessment of what pupils have already learnt. The organisation of activities and resources are focused closely on pursuing each pupil's targets. Where pupils work as part of a group, their activities are very well informed by a clear learning objective. Sensory resources, communication aids, visual and practical approaches to learning are used very skilfully to support progress. As a result of the excellent assessment and recording of progress done by teachers and their assistants, they generally know the pupils and their needs extremely well. Teachers are rightly refining further their analysis of performance information in order to respond promptly when pupils' progress occasionally stalls. Both the pace of learning and the challenge of work are skilfully managed to suit each pupil. In the further education department the approaches to students' work recognise and encourage their status as young adults very effectively. Across the school, pupils enjoy lessons as a result, are confident learners and make considerable efforts with their work. Support for learning is particularly strong. Teaching assistants make a brilliant contribution in this respect, working alongside teachers and confidently taking a lead in teaching individual pupils, small groups and, occasionally, whole classes.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The school has an exceptionally good curriculum that responds to the wide range of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The impact of the very detailed planning to meet pupils' needs is seen in their achievement and personal development. Thorough assessment of pupils and strong subject leadership have contributed enormously to the success of the curriculum.

There are a substantial number of strengths, provision for art, personal, social and health education and citizenship and the sensory curriculum, in particular. Across the school, but particularly in the Foundation stage and the further education department, there is a strong emphasis on independence, physical development and key skills in communication, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Close links with schools, sports and arts organisations broaden the range of activities which adds much variety and interest to pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils are cared for and supported exceptionally well. The staff's very good knowledge and skills in meeting varied and complex needs leaves pupils very secure, comfortable and happy. The substantial body of parents' opinion is that their children are exceptionally well looked after. One view representative of most is that, 'This is an excellent school in every way. The staff go beyond the call of duty for each and every child'.

School leaders have implemented rigorous health and safety and child protection procedures. Through the strong leadership of the staff in key worker roles there is also a sharp focus on developing and maintaining high quality support including bringing together specialist services such as medical, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy. Key workers do a particularly good job of supporting families by improving their skills and helping them access all the help available to them.

Detailed information from rigorous assessment means pupils' work is planned very precisely. Higher attaining pupils know their targets and what they have to do to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The headteacher plays an outstanding part in ensuring the school has clear direction and pursues high expectations in all of its work. The headteacher and governors have shown particular determination and skill in the successful amalgamation of the two distinctly different special schools that became Shorefields. Governors continue to perform an outstanding role in supporting the school as it develops and improves. Staff are a very cohesive team with a common sense of purpose which is focused sharply on pupils' personal development, achievement and preparation for the future. Leadership and management roles across the school are very clearly defined and carried out extremely effectively. The result of this is a quality of education that is outstanding leading to excellent outcomes for all pupils. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensures the school knows itself extremely well and this gives it an excellent capacity for further improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shorefields School at Ogilvie House, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 6HF

We greatly appreciated your warm welcome and the interest you showed during our recent visit to inspect your school.

I am writing to tell you what we found out.

We think your school is outstanding because it is so good at helping you to learn and grow up. Your progress is excellent. You are also doing superbly well in developing confidence and doing as much for yourself as possible.

There are lots of very interesting and worthwhile activities for you to do in school and we were pleased to see how much you enjoy these.

We think all of the staff are fantastic because they are really good teachers; they know you and look after you exceptionally well.

Your headteacher is doing an outstanding job of ensuring everything you need is in place and is the best that can be. The headteacher keeps a really close check on your progress and we have asked her to see that all your teachers are helped to do this as well. We thought it would be helpful if the school could improve how it manages your behaviour. Most of you behave well at school but some of you are sometimes upset by the actions of others. We hope that, with your teachers' guidance and support, you will work hard to improve this.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector