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Mrs Eileen Ollieuz
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ollieuz

Short inspection of Highshore School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2017 with Penny Barratt, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You and your team successfully meet your core aims in developing pupils' communication, self-help skills and independence. This enables your pupils to grow in confidence and develop a sense of responsibility. The school is a happy place with a warm and welcoming ethos, and this was evident on the day of the inspection.

Pupils are extremely positive about the school and say that the teachers are fun. They say that they feel safe. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. In lessons, there is a high level of pupil engagement and enjoyment.

Parents say that their children are happy and make significant progress after joining the school. They say the school prepares their children well for the future. One parent said, 'Highshore is a school I can confidently say my child looks forward to coming to every day. It's like her second home where she feels safe.'

The curriculum is broad and pupils participate in many exciting learning opportunities. Creative and practical subjects, such as art, drama, music and physical education, are strong within the school. You provide yoga and relaxation sessions for pupils to enjoy and improve their well-being. The enterprise, work skills and work experience curriculum is also a strength of the school and prepares pupils

well for the next stage of their lives. Last year, all pupils who left the school moved on to further education or training courses, and some gained part-time paid employment.

Staff are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. They say that behaviour is well managed and that 'everyone helps everyone else'. You have provided further development opportunities for three members of staff who are currently completing their teacher training.

Governors challenge leaders and hold them to account appropriately. They are committed to their roles and know the school well. Governors are supportive and proactive.

The parents' support group, led by a governor, promotes the values of the school and encourages the engagement of a wider group of parents and carers.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There are weekly updates for staff and all have the appropriate training. You and your safeguarding team also meet regularly with the link governor. You ensure that new staff receive thorough guidance as part of an induction package. The single central record is fully compliant and the school's recruitment procedures are secure. Staff are confident in reporting any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare. Pupils feel safe at school and are well informed about issues such as internet safety. They are confident to speak to staff about any worries they may have. Parents say their children are safe. Any bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at how leaders ensure that individual pupils are given work at the right level for them to make strong progress. In addition, we agreed to focus on how staff ensure opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills in lessons.
- We visited a range of classrooms with senior leaders. Across all age groups, we saw effective examples of pupils achieving well. Teachers tailored activities to individual pupils' needs and planned work which was appropriately challenging for pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers provide challenges for pupils across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 7 physical education lesson, pupils were given opportunities to practise their numeracy skills through counting. They also used their memory skills by remembering the sequence of warm-up activities. Teachers challenged pupils to think about the effects of exercise on their bodies.
- Teachers make learning fun. They adapt activities to meet pupils' needs and to engage them in learning. For example, in a Year 7 literacy lesson, staff and pupils dressed in costumes to act parts of a famous story. Teachers made the

most of opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills, such as by using the treasure map. In a food technology session, teachers extended pupils' understanding of different cultures and festivals very effectively in order to develop their understanding of the world around them.

- We saw effective opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. For example, in a Years 8 and 9 science lesson, pupils learned about different foods and wrote about their breakfast. In an English session, pupils were well supported to write the next part of 'Macbeth'. In both sessions, pupils were engaged and eager to share their written responses. Pupils respond impressively to teachers' challenging questions.
- While teachers are generally good at adapting and planning activities to meet individual pupils' needs, there are some inconsistencies. In some of the lessons we visited, activities were not well matched to pupils' needs, particularly the most able pupils.
- We also agreed to look at how leaders use assessment information to enable pupils to make good progress. Outcomes show high numbers of pupils making expected or better progress in reading, speaking and listening, writing and mathematics. To demonstrate these outcomes, the school puts the results from standardised tests into a national database. It is not clear how information from the standardised tests is used to help teachers' planning.
- Teachers also use another system to measure pupils' progress. This system takes into account the detailed, smaller steps of progress that pupils make in some subjects. However, the approach is not used consistently well by all teachers. You recognise the need to fully embed a school-wide assessment system that covers all subjects taught.
- You have recently increased the range of external accreditation opportunities available for pupils. You plan to develop more of these opportunities to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- We also agreed to look at pupils' attendance. Attendance has improved over time and is well monitored. Staff know pupils well and work closely with other professionals to support those pupils who are absent too often. The number of fixed-term exclusions is low. There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection. The school has clear systems for behaviour management which are clearly understood and implemented by staff.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is greater consistency in matching tasks to pupils' abilities in lessons, especially for the most able
- the school continues to develop appropriate external accreditation opportunities
- a whole-school assessment framework is developed that is used consistently well by staff and measures pupils' progress across a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tarrant
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team met with you, your senior leaders, middle leaders, the family support worker, teachers and teaching assistants. We reviewed the school's single central record and recruitment procedures. We met with members of the governing body, including the chair and parent governors. We also met with the school's improvement partner.

Inspectors visited classrooms with senior leaders to observe pupils' learning. We met with the school council to talk about their experience of school and aspects of safeguarding. We also met with a group of parents to gather their views on a range of matters including safeguarding and their children's progress. We scrutinised a wide range of school documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, pupils' files and folders. We took account of the four free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 36 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.