



Defence Children Services (DCS)

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Dear Parents and carers

My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit on the 18 and 19 November 2024. We were given a warm welcome by the school and its community, which helped us gain a wider understanding. This visit was part of a new assurance process called the ROSE Visit. More detail is included in Annex A.

We enjoyed speaking with staff, learners and their families to hear about their views and experiences of working with the school. Overall, SHAPE International is an effective school. The school fulfils its aims and consistently delivers on its offer.

What it is like to attend this school

Pupils are happy, safe and secure at this welcoming school. They enjoy learning new and exciting things with their many friends. They especially love their teachers who they describe as 'kind, helpful and funny'. Pupils know and remember their previous topics and make strong links to new learning. This boosts their understanding and fluency. Pupils appreciate the extensive opportunities available to them to follow their talents and interests. As a result, they benefit from the rich educational offer provided. Pupils like to be challenged, being successful both academically and in their personal skills. Pupils believe themselves to be incredible, in line with the school's embedded vision. They use their 'learning powers' and 'character values' to excellent effect.

Quality of Leadership at all levels – effective

The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher are a very successful and united team. As senior leaders they model the high expectations and achievement expected for all staff and learners. Senior leaders work extremely well with staff and Governors, helping them understand and perform their roles to benefit the school. Middle leadership, including subject leadership, continues to strengthen. The vision and values for the school are deeply embedded and impactful. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that sets out the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to know in every subject. Learning experiences are especially well considered. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is a strong feature of the school. For instance, pupils learn purposefully about different cultures, languages and religions. Mitigating mobility is well considered and delivered by experienced and empathetic staff.

Quality of provision and outcomes – effective

Relationships are a real strength. They are respectful, genuine and rooted in ambition. Pupils recognise the hard work staff apply to make their learning both exciting and

rewarding. Learners produce quality work and are proud of their achievements. Teachers ensure pupils know and remember more because they constantly revisit prior learning. Pupils achieve well, often very well, in both their academic and personal endeavours. Behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school are excellent. Pupils develop their knowledge well which enables them to talk in informed and mature ways about their learning. All support staff use their knowledge and skills to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Support staff benefit from strong internal work, for instance via the Deputy Head Teacher, to improve their subject knowledge and understanding of barriers to learning. This helps more vulnerable learners have their needs met quickly so they can learn successfully alongside their peers.

Safeguarding arrangements – effective

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have cultivated an open and positive culture. They prioritise protecting children from harm and teach them how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Staff take their training seriously. They reflect on actions and scenarios to check and challenge their understanding. All staff are knowledgeable, vigilant and extremely well led.

Next Step

As for any school, ambitious leaders and Governors want the best provision and outcomes. As such, there is an area to develop further, which is already known and being addressed. Leaders should refine the Strategy for Supporting Service children and publish via the website. This will ensure the strategy fully incorporates the full offer to parents. It will also enable Governors to hold leaders to account for the impact, not just the inputs. It will also allow the School Governance Committee more scope to nurture relationships and gain feedback from others, including parents.

Yours faithfully

Gareth Flemington

Governance and Performance Lead, HQ DCS

Annex A

Review of School Effectiveness (ROSE Visit) explanation

Ofsted has not inspected Ministry of Defence (MOD) Schools or Settings since long before the pandemic. Indeed, some establishments have not been visited for up to ten years. However, frequent quality assurance work has continued from regional school improvement teams. To supplement this, a ROSE Review Team visits schools to check on the quality of education and care.

As you may know, Ofsted continues to evolve and make changes to its own practice. For example, it removed the overall effectiveness grade from September 2024. The ROSE Visit is not an inspection. It is not seeking to replicate what Ofsted would do or how they would complete their processes. Instead, it is a robust two-day audit process completed by a large team of professionals from outside and inside the school.

At the end of the two-day visit, judgements are either agreed as 'effective' or 'working towards being effective'. The process considers the following main headings:

- Quality of leadership at all levels
- Quality of provision and outcomes
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Overall

Each element has a series of descriptors that consider many factors, including mobility and transition. The team collects, connects and considers evidence gathered against these descriptors. If the three elements are judged as effective, then overall the school is judged to be effective. If any elements do not meet the high standard, its overall outcome cannot be effective. A school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are taught well and consistently meet the clear aims of the curriculum and the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The process also considers:

- what it is like to attend this school
- the extent to which standards are being met and that learners are safe
- if all learners, including those with additional needs get a good deal too
- if learners are achieving as much as they can and are ready for the next stage
- the quality of pupil care, such as well-being and personal development,
- quality of provision and outcomes for learners
- the fulfilment of aims and the distinctiveness of each school, including its unique offer in the location

The audit process is carried out impartially by trained professionals with sufficient expertise and experience. The assurance process provides helpful information to schools and accurate evidence-based judgements to those who hold them to account. In the absence of an external inspectorate such as Ofsted, it provides an enhanced second level of defence assurance (2LoDA) to the two-star assurance board.

If any of the elements did not meet the high threshold to be effective, additional support and challenge would be triggered from within the regional school improvement teams.