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Jo Ashworth
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ashworth

Short inspection of St Peter's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 2019 with Sue Bzikot, 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 May 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of outstanding as a result of this inspection.**

The centre has changed substantially since it was last inspected. In September 2018, it relocated from being part of a hospital ward. The pupils who currently attend your provision learn in newly refurbished premises that are attractive, welcoming and fit for purpose as a short-stay school.

You have overseen the centre's move to the new site, initially on an interim basis, and now as the substantive headteacher. You have renewed the centre's purpose and are ably developing its changing role. Your work is strongly informed by your deep understanding of the needs of pupils who are experiencing a crisis in their health and are finding it traumatic to attend school. You are determined that the centre should play a pivotal role in returning pupils to school or college, and it does so successfully.

The centre's role has evolved since it was last inspected. You offer two different placement pathways: a short-stay programme for key stage 3 and 4 pupils, with a supported return to school; and a Year 11 programme that supports pupils to take GCSEs and transfer successfully into college. Pupils have a part-time placement of up to four half-days a week and the opportunity to study English, mathematics and science. They receive carefully tailored teaching input that helps them to catch up quickly with the learning they have missed. The Year 11 pupils make good progress and are able to take their GCSEs in their home school.

You also offer an early intervention programme for key stage 3 pupils to attend on one day a week for a six-week period. You have successfully achieved your aim for pupils to develop confidence and self-manage their anxieties. All supported pupils have improved their school attendance.

Centre staff currently work effectively with referring schools, on whose rolls the pupils remain, and with other agencies, such as the professionals from child and adolescent mental health services. Your staff have a unique role to inspire pupils to rejoin education and enjoy learning. In this way, St Peter's is often the catalyst for pupils to become motivated to make positive changes in their lives.

Parents are very positive about the centre's provision. A few of them said that they cannot praise the school and its staff highly enough. One parent said that they were not sure what they would have done without the support. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to re-engage with education and some of them describe their time at St Peter's as 'life-changing'.

Staff enjoy their work at the centre, and they contribute to its friendly ethos. They are well trained in the subjects that they teach, and they have specific expertise to meet the needs of their vulnerable pupils. You, together with your staff and governors, acknowledge that the centre has renewed potential, and you have identified clear future priorities. These are currently at a developmental stage.

Acting as a governing body, the centre's management committee has a strong understanding of the centre's work. The members are ambitious for its future development. You provide them with detailed information that helps them to keep clear oversight of the provision and pupils' achievements.

Safeguarding is effective.

You give a high priority to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. Your team has ensured that pupils learn in a safe environment. Each of you knows all of the pupils extremely well and they, in turn, quickly learn to trust the adults in the centre. Pupils' attendance at their offered sessions is very high and any absence is swiftly followed up to ensure that the pupil is safe.

You make strong relationships with parents, partner schools and external agencies that contribute towards keeping pupils safe. Records are detailed, and you ensure that they are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have all undertaken appropriate training and you provide everyone with regular updates. Helpful support and mentoring assist pupils in learning how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. You provide parents with useful advice so that they understand the particular online risks for vulnerable young people.

Inspection findings

- Small group sizes allow for teaching that is highly personalised to meet pupils' needs. Teachers have high expectations. Pupils complete a lot of work during lessons, and their workbooks show that it is of a consistently high standard across the three subjects that they access. Teachers question pupils effectively and give expert support to guide each pupil's learning. Teaching helps pupils to address any errors in their work and to express their ideas. Pupils complete the homework that they are given and, when they are at home, they use the centre's virtual learning environment to support their studies.
- During the inspection, we saw that pupils' behaviour was exemplary. They were polite and they took a genuine interest in their own progress by asking questions and concentrating independently on their work when they were asked to do so. Your wider staff team includes higher-level teaching assistants who are on site each day. They lead engaging sessions that help to develop pupils' social skills, offering well-matched praise and encouragement to involve pupils in discussion and helping them to talk confidently within a group.
- Sometimes, pupils' barriers to learning are as the consequence of undiagnosed special educational needs and/or disabilities. More often, pupils' need for support has arisen as a result of a traumatic experience. Before pupils first start at the centre, parents, schools and other agencies form a strong bond, with the shared aim that the pupil will re-engage with learning and school. Over time, the centre's provision makes a significant difference in helping pupils to make enough progress to follow a route back into school or college.
- The centre has made some recent changes to the curriculum, including by introducing some horticultural study into the science offer, through a weekly mindfulness session and by giving pupils more social opportunities. Staff discuss careers with pupils as part of weekly topic-themed workshops. Within these workshops, pupils cover some of the content for personal, social and health education. They also learn about the importance of fundamental British values, such as respect and tolerance for people of different faiths. These sessions support pupils' social development effectively, but they are not sharply linked to building all of the personal and emotional skills that leaders identify as being pertinent to pupils' needs.
- The curriculum is very well matched to pupils' needs when they first start at the centre. At this stage, pupils benefit from being gently nurtured to resume academic study. However, once pupils start to enjoy learning, and their health improves, the centre's provision does not offer enough breadth and balance. Other than in English, mathematics and science, subject content does not have enough depth. A few of the referring schools take steps to arrange for pupils to join one or more preferred other subjects. However, plans are not equally robust with all referring schools.
- Although parents and pupils praised the centre's work, both groups told inspectors that pupils would like access to more subjects, such as physical education. Pupils would also like there to be more contact time for lessons, once they start to feel better.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- provision is adapted so that pupils spend an increasing amount of time in education as soon as their health enables them to do so
- the centre's curriculum offers a greater breadth and balance to provide for pupils' academic, personal, social and emotional development needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, inspectors met with you and each of the staff members who were on site that day. I met with two members of the management committee, including the chair. We visited two lessons taught by one teacher and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work. We took account of one response from Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, as well as the views of one parent who talked with us during the school day. We reviewed three responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. We also met with the five pupils who attended sessions. We observed their behaviour in lessons and around the centre.

We looked at a wide range of school documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school's website and its policies; the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; information relating to the work of your management committee; records relating to pupils' needs; and all safeguarding information, including the governors' single central record of recruitment checks.