



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Ms Amanda Spielman
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Office for Standards in Education
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

22 February 2019

Dear Ms Spielman,

I am writing to you in relation to the very serious concerns expressed to me, almost on a weekly basis, by constituents who have had poor experiences from local schools in relation to their child's Special Educational Needs.

I hear regularly from parents and carers who have serious worries about not only the lack of SEN support available within schools to their children, but also about the approach of the management structure to ensuring inclusion.

I feel strongly that much more must be done to support and ensure inclusion within schools – and that Ofsted has a very real role to play in making this possible. I believe that Ofsted's current framework has contributed to unacceptable increases levels of school exclusions, many of them children with SEN.

Sheffield's Pupil Referral Unit has 120 places but had 350 children sent there last year and rather than fulfilling the role of helping transition children back into mainstream education, it is increasingly finding children with SEN spending their entire education there – provision which is not appropriate to meet their needs. As you well know, Ofsted found that high levels of fixed-term and permanent exclusions in Sheffield result in children and young people with SEND not achieving as well as they should and that good outcomes for children and young people with SEN are compromised by the widespread use of partial timetables for lengthy periods.

I have already written to the Timpson review and to the Secretary of State to express concern that the numbers of fixed-terms exclusions in Sheffield exceeds the national average.

I understand that in an announcement made on the 16th January 2019 there is to be an updated inspection framework, part of which entails a move away from a school's internal data performance data and outcomes, and a refocus on quality of education and of the quality of learning for pupils, across the curriculum. I believe that the announcement of a new inspection framework, which is to form the basis of all inspections of schools and other institutions from this September, provides Ofsted with an opportunity to also include as part of its assessment process an analysis of a school's inclusion strategy and outcomes in supporting children with SEN.

I would be grateful if you could confirm what consideration is given to a school's inclusion strategy and performance and whether there are any plans to change this to address the ever-increasing pressures on SEN services across our education system.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Haigh', written in a cursive style.

Louise Haigh MP