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6 October 2010

Ms Debbie Ramsay
Executive Head of Centre
The Clifton Centre
117 Silverdale
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Swinton
Greater Manchester
M27 8GW

Dear Ms Ramsay

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Clifton Centre

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 5 October 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the teachers and students I spoke to and to the representatives from the local authority.

There have been significant changes to the leadership of the centre since the previous inspection. The headteacher retired, having previously been seconded to a different role within the local authority. An interim management team was put in place in April; this included the two deputy headteachers, who both retired at the end of the summer term. In September an executive head of centre was appointed, supported by a senior associate head of centre, a senior vocational adviser and an associate headteacher. This management structure will be reviewed in December. Salford City Council plans to decommission the current Pupil Referral Units in the authority and replace them with four Learning Recovery Units. This plan is still evolving and the authority is awaiting various consultancy reports to inform the process.

As a result of the inspection on 1 July 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

September 2010



There are currently 42 students on roll. One area for improvement outlined in the previous inspection report concerned low attendance levels. Attendance levels are still below those expected in most schools; however, they have improved significantly.

At the end of the summer term, 33 Year 11 students left the centre, most gained basic literacy and numeracy qualifications and a high proportion went on to further education, training or employment. During the course of last year, five students were successfully reintegrated back into mainstream education and two students with a statement of special educational needs moved on to appropriate alternative provision. Students' attainment remains below average. In the main this is due to their lack of progress in their previous schools. In the lessons observed students' development of skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of subjects was satisfactory and in some cases good. Many students have a history of poor behaviour; however, behaviour observed was satisfactory both in classrooms and around the buildings.

At the previous inspection inspectors were concerned about the arrangements to support students attending the centre as a result of a fixed period of exclusion from secondary school. In September 2009 the local authority advised mainstream schools that the centre was no longer available to support students who are excluded for a fixed period. An additional building was secured for use by the centre from the start of this term and this has improved the environment for learning. Despite the significant investment to improve vocational provision on the main site, for example, by the provision of a new beauty salon and gym, some parts of the existing building remain in a dilapidated condition.

After the previous inspection an action plan was put in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Progress was at first slow; however, there are signs that the rate of improvement is accelerating. For example, there have been positive developments in the teaching of functional skills and sharing of good practice with other local Pupil Referral Units. Aspects of lesson planning, the use of individual learning plans and marking still need to be improved to ensure that lessons are consistently good. This monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures by scrutinising the single central record and found this to be secure. The local authority set up the Clifton Centre Review Group in July 2009, including a National Leader in Education and the School Improvement Partner. This group has enabled good multi-agency support to be provided to the Centre.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Johnson
Her Majesty's Inspector

September 2010

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009

- Improve pupils' achievement and personal development by taking all necessary steps to ensure that they attend school.
- Work closely with the local authority to provide accommodation for the centre that is fit for purpose.
- Provide separate accommodation and suitable programmes of work for local pupils referred to the centre on the sixth day of temporary exclusion.
- Improve teaching by making sure that the best use is made of time and full use is made of all resources including electronic whiteboards.