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Jane Reason  
Albany Centre  
Beard Road  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP32 6SA

Dear Mrs Reason

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to the Albany Centre**

Following my visit to your school on 5 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in 13 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the chair of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. A range of information was reviewed, including data concerning pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour, and the school's improvement plans. Visits were made to two lessons.

#### **Context**

There have been no changes to the leadership and management of the school. The most recent recruitment campaign resulted in a permanent appointment for mathematics from April, however did not provide an English teacher. The school has made temporary arrangements to teach these subjects, and is aware that the recruitment of good quality teachers is important to its effective improvement.

## Main findings

Joint observations of teaching indicate the school has an accurate picture of its overall quality.

Observations during the visit support the school's positive view about its effectiveness in tackling poor behaviour, including high quality relationships between staff and pupils, high expectations for good behaviour and successful de-escalation of potentially difficult situations.

Pupils' progress is monitored towards their expected outcomes, making use of national data and given the pupils' ages and attainment starting points.

The moderation of pupils' attainments is too narrow to ensure its accuracy. Local authority advisers work with the school to review pupils' attainments. Further arrangements have been made to extend the limited moderation with other schools.

Alternative provision from Zone for Learning, the Green Light Trust, NACRO, and West Suffolk College extends the curriculum. Evaluation of the effectiveness of these partnerships on pupils' achievement is not yet comprehensive. Work experience opportunities are underdeveloped.

There is a detailed school improvement plan that includes the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Work has begun to focus this planning on the most important areas for improvement.

The management committee is well informed about the school's actions and the challenges it faces, together with information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.

The school works closely with the local authority, however not all pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provide by the government for pupils at risk of underachievement) attend well enough.

Senior leaders, the management committee and the local authority have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure high quality teaching of English and mathematics
- work with other schools to ensure the accuracy of pupils' attainment and progress information
- work closely with the local authority to improve pupils' attendance
- review the effectiveness of alternative provision arrangements to ensure pupils are making at least good progress towards their planned achievements

- improve school planning to ensure priorities are identified, together with the intended impact of planned actions on pupils' progress, where possible
- the work closely with local authority to improve the school's accommodation.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing effective support for the school's improvements since the inspection. It has not been sufficiently successful in working with the school to improve some pupils' attendance. Aspects of the school's premises are inadequate; a few of the windows were either not able to be opened safely or were boarded up.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the management committee and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

Charlie Henry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**