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3 July 2013

Helen Whitehead  
Headteacher  
Sheffield Inclusion Centre  
Spring Lane  
Sheffield  
S2 2JQ

Dear Ms Whitehead

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Sheffield Inclusion Centre**

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

This visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Management Board and a local authority representative. Documents, including the local authority's statement of action and the centre's improvement plans were evaluated. The inspector also briefly visited several classes at the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 site.

### **Context**

Five teachers have resigned since the March inspection, including three team leaders. A permanent assistant headteacher has been appointed for the primary unit and temporary staff are covering the posts of the staff that have already left. However, there are four vacant posts and three members of staff are absent due to maternity leave.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Senior leaders accepted the judgement that the centre requires special measures but some staff found this message a bitter pill to swallow. This denial slowed the initial impetus of change and improvement. Valuable time was taken up making it plain to staff just how deep-rooted the problems and the issues afflicting this complex centre's various provisions were and how ineffective certain practices had been.

Having given staff this 'reality check', the headteacher has shared her vision for a viable future for the centre and secured the backing of the majority of staff, who recognise the urgency with which the centre must begin to provide substantially better value for money as a service. Momentum is increasing and a raft of new procedures and strategies aimed at kick-starting the centre's recovery have been launched. Staffing has been restructured to meet the needs of the students better and improve management efficiency. The curriculum has been radically altered to ensure it complies with requirements and is better matched to students' stage of development and interests. More robust assessment and monitoring systems are now in place so that students' rates of progress can be tracked precisely. There is also ongoing training to boost the quality of teaching and equip staff to carry out their roles more effectively. Measures to improve behaviour and raise attendance levels are also being rolled out. Leaders are being robust in challenging inadequacy and have adopted routine and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the centre's work. On the next monitoring visit, the litmus test will be whether the centre can show inspectors clear evidence of meaningful improvement as a result of all of the actions taken.

The management committee now has a host of experienced educationalists who can offer the necessary challenge and support to influence the centre's rapid improvement strategically. An external review of governance is ongoing but there is evidence from the minutes of meetings that governors are operating more effectively than before, and scrutinising and questioning closely what is happening in all parts of the centre.

The local authority is delivering more focused challenge and support to the centre than it has shown before. It brokered a partnership with a teaching school and the associated teaching alliance is supporting training and development in each of the centre's deficit areas. The authority has also set up a steering group to monitor and evaluate the centre's progress in tackling its key issues. It is also providing the services of several consultants, including an executive headteacher to accelerate the centre's removal from special measures. This major intervention is necessary.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's recently redrafted improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Management Board and the Interim Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Young  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**