

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 1231231
Maple View Text Phone: 0161 6188524
Skelmersdale enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
WN8 9TG www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566933
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
ggleaden@cfbt.com



5 December 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 with Philip Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 3 and 4 of December 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The centre is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. 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.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better, particularly at the primary unit, at Spring Lane and for teenage mothers by:
 - matching teachers to the age group and subjects for which they have been trained, particularly in English and mathematics
 - providing appropriate training for non-qualified staff who are working as teachers
 - making sure all adults manage pupils' behaviour appropriately and in line with the centre's policy
 - making sure that all lessons are well planned so they are not too easy nor too difficult for the individual pupils
 - ensuring that adults have a good understanding of the National Curriculum levels and that they are accurate in their assessments of pupils' attainment and progress.

- Ensure that all pupils make at least good progress in order to raise attainment and improve their achievement by:
 - improving attendance through the consistent use of the policies and systems agreed by senior leaders
 - making certain that pupils are taught all the subjects they are entitled to and that the curriculum is carefully matched to their individual needs, age and interests
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects such as science and the humanities
 - working with pupils to set targets for literacy and numeracy so they understand how they will make progress and improve.

- Ensure that leadership and management of the centre are highly effective by:
 - making sure that all the required and recommended policies are in place, are understood by staff and are firmly embedded in their classroom practice
 - making certain that leaders check carefully on the quality of teaching and the curriculum in all parts of the centre's work
 - building on the recently introduced system for checking pupils' progress so they achieve equally well regardless of gender, background, disability or special educational needs
 - making certain that the management committee fulfils its role of checking and questioning what is happening in all parts of the centre
 - making sure that some of the longer established leaders and middle managers fully understand their responsibilities and improve their performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2013

Evidence

During this inspection inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 of the 17 classes at the secondary and primary centres. Meetings were held with you and several other leaders and managers, the Chair of the Management Committee and a local authority representative. Inspectors examined pupils' work and observed their behaviour in and out of lessons. The inspectors also scrutinised the centre's action plans, new procedures, monitoring and evaluation records of pupils' progress, curriculum developments, the quality of teaching, behaviour and attendance.

Context

Eleven members of staff have resigned or left since the July monitoring inspection. Eight have already left with two others leaving at the end of December 2013. Two full-time teachers have been employed but there are several supply teachers covering the other vacant posts. Currently, five teachers, including the two due to leave at the end of December, and one teaching assistant, are absent due to illness. A new chair of the management committee has been appointed. The centre no longer has responsibility for home and hospital education.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The 2013 GCSE results confirm that student achievement at the Spring Lane site remains exceptionally low overall. The latest academic tracking information is more positive and indicates some 'green shoots' of improvement since the first monitoring inspection, with an increasing proportion of students making at least expected, rather than inadequate, progress, in the key subjects of mathematics and English. At the primary provision on Clifford Road, there is less clarity about the progress pupils are making because tracking arrangements are in their infancy and the first analysis has not yet taken place. The more robust target setting, tracking and support plans in place at the secondary provision are giving students a clearer idea of their targets, how well they are progressing towards them and explaining exactly what they need to do to achieve or exceed them. At present, the centre does not have a clear view of the relative performance of different groups of students and pupils, such as those eligible for pupil premium funding or minority ethnic heritage students.

The quality of teaching

The impact of teaching on students' and pupils' learning remains variable across the provision, with good teaching counterbalanced by inadequate teaching. However, to the credit of staff, there has been a shift in the profile, with a higher proportion of lessons seen during this inspection where teaching and learning were good, especially at Spring Lane. Staff are profiting from the major training and development they have had to enhance their generic teaching skills and subject-specific competencies. The advice, guidance and support gleaned from: in-house coaching; specialist leaders of education at Silverdale School; and staff at Holgate Meadows and Heritage Park schools, who specialise in the education of children with

emotional and behavioural difficulties, has also proved valuable. New staff have settled quickly and a number are proving their effectiveness. Good features of the teaching seen included: the high expectations of staff; the systematic and progressive way in which students' and pupils' knowledge and understanding of key concepts and skills were developed in some lessons; and the good engagement created by thought-provoking and 'fun' learning activities. This improvement in teaching quality and consistency is promising, but it is fragile due to the turbulence in staffing that the centre continues to experience. Less effective aspects included: a poor match of work to pupils' ability and a lack of specificity about learning outcomes, so that pupils were unclear about what was expected of them; and missed opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills or correct misconceptions in students' thinking.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The centre is having some success in establishing a more purposeful learning atmosphere and cooperative ethos in which staff and students know the boundaries and do not cross them routinely. Consequently, the volume of serious incidents and exclusions are falling, although there is significant further improvement required. During this inspection the behaviour observed was mostly calm and positive and where it was not, it was generally well managed by staff. Expectations are higher and staff are more consistent in their approach so that students and pupils are less likely to be confused by the mixed messages and differing responses to/actions from staff the same behaviour can cause. From a very low baseline, attendance at Spring Lane has risen and persistent absence has fallen, but both remain big concerns to inspectors, particularly the attendance of certain groups, such as children who are looked after and Black British boys. Current approaches are not proving effective enough in securing substantial improvements, despite the centre's efforts to date. Attendance is much stronger at Clifford Road.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

There is some clear evidence that leaders and managers are exerting an increasingly effective strategic influence across the centre. This is demonstrated by the emerging improvements in student achievement, more effective teaching and learning and an enhanced atmosphere and ethos. There is a discernible difference in the efficiency with which the centre now runs day to day in terms of: the breadth and balance of the curriculum now offered; staff improved adherence to new procedures and policies, such as those for assessment, marking, feedback, behaviour and for management; and the regularity and rigour of monitoring and evaluation. Collectively, the centre's leaders are instilling more order and structure. They are putting in place some sound building blocks and are driving through a series of improvement measures in an uncompromising but collaborative fashion and have taken some 'difficult' decisions that they felt were in the best interests of the young people the centre serves and staff are under no illusions about the increased accountability they are subject to. Lesson observations, planning and book scrutiny, canvassing the opinions of children and assessing children's progress more regularly,

are some of the ways in which leaders are monitoring and evaluating the impact of their improvement strategies and refining their approaches accordingly.

Senior leaders are pragmatic and have high expectations of themselves and others. They recognise that the improvements secured so far, on balance, are moderate rather than considerable overall, when set against the time that has elapsed since the centre was placed into special measures, the centre's current effectiveness and the time that remains before the centre is re-inspected. Inspectors have reiterated to them that big improvements are required on each subsequent monitoring inspection if the centre is to 'stay on track' and emerge from the special measures category as quickly as possible. They also accept that the current pace of change needs to be sustained and built upon.

The management committee is implementing the recommendations from the external review of governance and is working closely with a national leader of governance to improve their impact further. They have established a more streamlined committee structure that allows them to receive regular updates, bring their relevant experience in school improvement to bear and to interrogate and challenge senior leaders rigorously about the extent and pace of the centre's improvement.

External support

The local authority continues to provide the intensive package of challenge and support to the centre highlighted at the previous monitoring inspection. This remains vital as the centre still faces an 'uphill battle' to improve its overall effectiveness. The local authority carried out a formal review of the centre's progress in addressing the key areas for improvement in October 2013. It recognised that some progress has been made but concluded that substantial further improvement was required.