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4 April 2014

Mrs Helen Johnson  
Headteacher  
West Cumbria Learning Centre  
Toll Bar  
Distinguon  
Workington  
Cumbria  
CA14 4PJ

Dear Mrs Johnson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of West Cumbria Learning Centre**

Following my visit to your centre on 3 April 2014, 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 which have been taken since the centre's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the centre became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, interim deputy headteacher, staff, the Chair of the Management Committee and two representatives of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the centre's improvement plan were evaluated. I also looked at teachers' files, performance management targets, management committee minutes, and various other documents that support the centre's self-evaluation document.

### **Context**

You joined the centre in January 2014 as interim headteacher and have subsequently been appointed as the permanent headteacher. An interim deputy headteacher was appointed in February 2014.

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

The centre's action plan and the local authority's statement of action tackle all the areas for improvement detailed in the previous inspection report. However, the allocation of pupil premium funding needs to be clarified by the local authority to ensure that the management committee is aware of its impact on learning, and can incorporate this into its review of governance. The local authority has conducted a review of the centre's progress; offered advice and practical support through work scrutiny; brokered support from a National Leader of Education from the Pendlebury Centre in Stockport; and made arrangements for the centre staff to visit mainstream schools to observe and share good practice.

A more robust sub-committee structure enables the management committee to offer improved support and challenge to the centre and this is reflected in the minutes of their meetings.

You restructured the roles and responsibilities of staff in the centre to improve the monitoring by middle leaders and increase accountability. All teachers' performance management targets are in line with the centre's action plan to encourage rapid progress. Improved communication channels through weekly newsletters to staff and management committee members, increase awareness of your expectations and your drive for greater consistency across the centre. Teachers' files are standardised to enable middle leaders to monitor the quality of lesson planning and its impact on students' progress. The new marking policy is applied more consistently across the centre and improved feedback enables students to know how to correct and improve their work. Weekly meetings enable staff to discuss the impact attendance, behaviour and emotional well-being have on the academic progress of the students so staff can implement effective support.

Links with mainstream schools are improving as the transition processes into the centre and back to mainstream become quicker and clearer. There are increased referrals this term and a higher number of students re-integrated into mainstream schools. Parents are kept well-informed about changes within the centre.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The centre's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The centre 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 Committee, and the Director of Children's Services for Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely,

Christina McIntosh

**Her Majesty's Inspector**