

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View

Skelmersdale

WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566932

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** [hcarnall@cfbt.com](mailto:hcarnall@cfbt.com)



11 March 2015

Mrs Francesca Cannarella  
Interim Headteacher  
Cheshire East Pupil Referral Unit  
The Oakley Centre  
West Street  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 2 PZ

Dear Mrs Cannarella

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Cheshire East Pupil Referral Unit**

Following my visit to your school on 10 March 2015, 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2014. 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 school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school 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 and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire East.

Yours sincerely

Drew Crawshaw

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - eradicating all inadequate teaching
  - making sure teachers plan lessons that motivate students because the content is inherently interesting and they see a relevance in what they are learning and so their attitudes to learning are consistently good
  - teachers setting work that is at the right level for students of different abilities so that it is neither too easy nor too difficult
  - ensuring that teaching assistants are always deployed where they can make the most difference to students' learning.
  
- Improve students' rates of progress, especially in English and consequently their attainment by:
  - improving the teaching of basic reading, writing and mathematical skills and ensuring that work in other subjects gives students plenty of opportunities to use and apply these skills
  - getting students to work hard and think things out for themselves
  - insisting that students always present their work to a good standard.
  
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including the management committee, so that improvement is driven forward at a rapid rate by:
  - reducing the level of supply staff as quickly as possible and making swift decisions about the appointment of permanent senior leaders
  - rapidly introducing a rigorous system for managing the performance of teachers ensuring that all students on part-time tuition programmes have a full-time education and so that attendance improves further
  - analysing data on students' progress and attainment so that leaders know how well different groups of students are doing and making sure improvement plans are based on these findings
  - making sure students are prepared well for reintegration into mainstream schools so that they very rarely have to return to the unit
  - ensuring that the management committee has a full and accurate view of students' achievements, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding, how teachers' performance is managed and how this relates to the pay they receive
  - undertaking an external review of the management committee, to include a specific focus on the impact of pupil premium funding, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance can be improved.
  
- The management committee should:
  - make representation to the local authority in order to secure a suitable and permanent building venue for the unit

- ensure that the plans to address the budget deficit are realised.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 10 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher along with the deputy headteacher, a group of students, teachers, the Chair of the Management Committee and a representative from the local authority. The inspector observed learning in three part-lessons. The inspector scrutinised a sample of students' work-books.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to key staff within the school. However, one governor, with significant and relevant experience, has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the management committee.

School leaders are consulting with the Department for Education with regard to the constitution of an interim executive board to replace the incumbent management committee.

A significant amount of building work has taken place in order to remodel classrooms and administration facilities situated at the Oakley Centre. This has resulted in three large classrooms being split into six smaller rooms and a number of administration offices being appropriately segregated from the main teaching area.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The school's work to improve the quality of information it receives about the academic, social, emotional and behavioural development of students prior to them starting at Cheshire East Pupil Referral Unit is beginning to pay dividends. Leaders' analysis of the school's own data shows that when the school receives information about the specific needs of students it is able to support students effectively in their mainstream school. For example, four out of the seven Year 11 students placed at the school since the last monitoring visit have remained in their mainstream school rather than being permanently excluded.

Steps taken to improve the literacy skills of students who attend the school have been effective. Teachers' use of the whole-school marking policy is helping students improve their presentation, punctuation, spelling and grammar skills across all subjects. In English lessons, students frequently respond to the teacher's comments written in their books to improve their work. In one lesson visited by the inspector, a student was able to show how he had re-drafted his work so that it could be submitted to a writing competition. This is a significant improvement compared to the quality of writing seen at the previous inspection.

Since the previous monitoring visit there have been no changes to the teachers and other adults who work with the students on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, all adults at the school understand the specific needs of students. Students say that this

has helped them to build strong relationships with their teachers and the other adults who help them. In the lessons visited by the inspector, students responded positively to being encouraged to work as hard as they could and to work things out for themselves. For example, in a mathematics lesson students were working well in small groups to factorise equations. In another example, students in a form group tutorial lesson worked on their own to develop their own ideas while producing a poster to show how some media has become sexualised. This is good progress for these students and demonstrates that they are building resilience.

### **The quality of teaching**

All teaching observed, including that by teaching assistants, contributed effectively to students' progress. Teachers and teaching assistants use effectively their training, for example in behaviour management and restorative justice. This means learning time is not lost because adults ensure that students remain focussed on their own work rather than being distracted by the behaviour of other students. Scrutiny of students' work-books showed that students' writing has both improved in quality and increased in quantity since the last monitoring visit.

Additional training in how teachers mark students' work has resulted in students' work being marked quickly and precisely. The majority of students check their own work and respond to teachers' comments. Consequently, the rate at which students' progress is beginning to improve compared to before the inspection.

Where leaders use the information they have about students well, interventions are used effectively to support the specific needs of students. For example, one student who had previously been identified as a poor attendee, with attendance of 41%, received additional mentoring sessions. Subsequently, this student's attendance had improved to 86%. This is an indication of substantial progress in this student's attitude to learning.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The behaviour of students overall has improved since the last monitoring visit. Training for all staff in how to manage behaviour has been used effectively because adults have strong relationships with students. Students have benefited from having no changes, since the last monitoring visit, to the adults who work with them on a day-to-day basis. These adults understand the specific needs of all students and are therefore able to apply behaviour management strategies consistently well across the school.

Leaders' analysis of the school's own data shows an improving trend in behaviour since the last monitoring visit. The number of recorded incidents of misbehaviour in class along with the number of incidents of students being asked to leave a classroom due to poor behaviour has more than halved in both cases. As the number of students on roll at the school has increased from 27 to 39 since the last monitoring visit, this is a significant improvement.

Students' spoken with agree that the changes to the building have benefitted students at the school. Students' report that their learning is now not disrupted by students from other lessons, as often as it was before the changes took place. This means that students are able to concentrate for longer, and consequently they 'can do more work'. This view was corroborated by the inspector's scrutiny of student's work which included several examples of extended writing by students in their English work-books. This is a noteworthy improvement since before the inspection.

Changes to the building have resulted in improvements in the safety of students at the school. A reconfiguration of the main entrance to the school has ensured that all visitors can be screened appropriately before entering the main area of the school. This has strengthened safeguarding procedures at the school.

However, electronic locks used to prevent unwanted access to the site are also used in other areas of the school and in particular on classroom doors. While preventing students entering classrooms without permission is supporting improvements in learning, leaders are aware that they need to take action immediately to ensure students cannot be locked in rooms either by mistake or against their will.

Furthermore, students still have to use public toilets in The Oakley Centre. Despite leaders' best efforts to ensure students are appropriately supervised when using the toilets, this quite rightly remains a significant safety concern to leaders.

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

Leaders have quite rightly concentrated on embedding the improvements seen at the last monitoring visit. However, this has not been at the expense of a relentless drive by leaders to improve the school even further. Improvements in the safety, behaviour and academic and personal development of students as a whole are a direct result of the dogged determination of leaders and all other adults to give their best in everything they do.

The efforts of leaders, reported on following the last monitoring visit, to improve the referral and admissions process has begun to bear fruit. Information which the school receives from students' mainstream schools and from their parents is used well to put appropriate support plans in place quickly. The school's own data show that when the school receives good quality information about a Year 11 student, before he or she is placed at the school, the risk of permanent exclusion is reduced. Leaders are aware that they now need to use this good source of information about students to ensure that every teacher is able to plan for students' specific needs from the student's first day of admission into the school.

Systems put in place by leaders to record information about students' academic attainment, behaviour, social and emotional development, personal development and attitudinal development are strong. Leaders are aware that they need to use this information effectively to determine what expected outcomes should look like

for each student. Leaders are also aware that they should evaluate robustly students' progress towards their specific targets and take action swiftly if progress is not good enough.

Although the Chair of the Management Committee, together with the local authority representative, are of the opinion that a suitable site on which to build a new school has been identified, the school is yet to receive official confirmation of this. The current site, as described in the last inspection report along with two monitoring visit reports, albeit significantly improved, is not fit for purpose and continues to hinder students' progress.

As with the last monitoring visit report, although the management committee expects the school to convert to an academy, the school has not received confirmation that a sponsor has been identified.

### **External support**

The local authority attendance officer has put systems in place to improve relationships between parents and the school. As a result, attendance, although still poor overall, is beginning to show signs improvement with an overall attendance of 62% on the day of the monitoring visit. Action has also been taken to improve the safety of students not in school. For example, frequent home visits and phone calls to parents ensure that leaders' are confident that an appropriate adult knows the whereabouts of each student.

### **Immediate action should be taken to ensure:**

- students cannot be locked in rooms either by mistake or against their will. On the day of the inspection the interim headteacher arranged for the electronic locks on classroom doors to remain open whilst students are in class and also placed an order for an alternative exit button to be fitted on all classroom doors.