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10 March 2015

Mr Matt McCluskey  
Denewood Learning Centre  
113 Forest Road West  
Nottingham  
NG7 4ES

Dear Mr McCluskey

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Denewood Learning Centre**

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place December 2014.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection two meetings were held with you and the interim executive headteacher. I toured the centre's site to see the improvements made to health and safety. I met with the joint Directors of Education and special educational needs advisor from the local authority. Meetings were also held with the centre's lead teacher for behaviour, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the human resources business partner from the local authority. The centre's improvement plan and the local authority's statement of action were evaluated.

### **Context**

Following the inspection in December 2014, a period of disruption to the leadership of the centre has occurred. The centre's headteacher and deputy headteacher are currently not at work. You are acting headteacher and responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre on a temporary basis. The local authority has arranged for an interim executive headteacher to support you for at least one day per week. An interim executive board has been appointed to replace the governing body, but has yet to meet. One member of staff has left since the inspection in December 2014.

The acting headteacher and interim executive board are also responsible for the Unity learning centre which is a provision for students aged 14 to 16 years.

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

The centre and the local authority are working closely together to bring about improvements. Rigorous action has been taken to swiftly rectify shortcomings identified during the inspection with regard to health and safety. Fire doors and isolation room doors are now unlocked and provide access to suitable areas or exits. During my visit you decided to undertake further checks regarding staff recruitment in order to satisfy statutory requirements.

Following the December 2014 inspection, the centre's leaders and local authority officers decided to find alternative provision for the majority of pupils. One eighth of pupils now access their education at the Denewood site. All other pupils are now educated at one of six alternative providers or at one of two other school sites. All pupils remain on the roll of Denewood learning centre and one quarter of pupils are accessing part-time provision. The attendance of pupils has declined since the inspection due to increased levels of exclusion.

The management of pupils' behaviour at the Denewood site has improved significantly since the inspection. There has been a steep decline in the use of restrictive physical interventions and isolation spaces to manage poor behaviour. An improved recording system is now in place following any incident. The new system allows pupils and staff to receive constructive feedback from senior staff.

The acting headteacher has ensured that 'pupil voice' is now being heard. Pupils at the Denewood site are expressing increasingly positive views about their education.

The centre's improvement plan sets out appropriate actions to tackle the areas for improvement from the inspection. The timings of actions are not specific enough, however, to enable close monitoring of progress and early identification of any slippage. The plan does not make clear who will be responsible for completing the actions and who will be monitoring that they are done. Similarly, the separate arrangements for evaluating how well the centre is making progress are not made clear. Key policies are being reviewed and staff are being encouraged to contribute to this process.

The local authority has provided a considerable amount of support to the centre since the December 2014 inspection, including undertaking the health and safety audit, organising the support from the interim executive headteacher and establishing the interim executive board.

The local authority's statement of action needs to make clear when each action is to take place and specify who will check on progress in implementing the support.

The centre's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is not 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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison

**Associate Inspector**

cc. Chair of the Governing Body

cc. Local authority

cc. The Secretary of State