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22 May 2015

Mr Chris Millard  
Interim executive headteacher  
Kingsfield Centre  
Chilton Way  
Stowmarket  
Suffolk  
IP14 1SZ

Dear Mr Millard

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Kingsfield Centre**

Following my visit to your pupil referral unit on 20 May 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 taken since the unit's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the pupil referral unit became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015.

### **Evidence**

I spent the day at the Chilton Road site. Meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the consultant, staff and four students on the Chilton Way site, the Chair of the Management Committee and two committee members, and the unit's local authority adviser. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. I scrutinised the single central register of checks on staff's suitability to work with children. I toured the school.

### **Context**

The executive headteacher left in March 2015 and you have led the unit since 13 April 2015. This arrangement, together with the appointment of an external consultant to the senior management team, is in place until the end of the autumn term 2015. A completely different management committee was established in March 2015. The management committee hopes to appoint a permanent headteacher for

January 2016. The Department for Education is considering the feasibility of the unit converting to an academy, with a local sponsor.

Local authority advisers agreed to your request to suspend admissions to the unit until the autumn term 2015. There are 52 students on role.

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

The new leadership team quickly identified that the unit's weaknesses are even more extensive than the significant inadequacies noted at the February 2015 inspection. The more they looked into the unit's practice, the more they found that was of concern. This includes the unreliability and availability of checks on staff's suitability to work with students, high staff absence, a lack of performance management, inappropriate and inconsistent management of students' behaviour, Year 11 students ill-prepared for GCSEs and unreliable information about the number of students on roll. Leaders, advisers and committee members are working on a two-year plan for the removal of special measures.

Local authority advisers quickly put a plan in place to support the unit. The plan includes a commitment to significant financial support, mostly to fund consultants and advisers. You have set up an improvement plan focusing on getting to the heart of the unit's difficulties. The plan incorporates the support identified in the local authority's plan. There is still work to do to make sure that the two plans complement each other fully and for the unit's plan to set clear targets for improvement in the long term. The local authority's plan is sufficiently flexible to adjust timescales and deliver support to match the unit's priorities. A school improvement board is established and will meet each half term to evaluate the effectiveness of the plans. One meeting has already taken place.

Staff have not seen the improvement plan. This, together with uncertainty about future leadership of the unit mean that staff feel uninformed about the part that they play in the improvements needed. However, all teaching staff have been reminded of their responsibilities and accountabilities within the government's *Teachers standards* (2012). This is being reinforced through an on-going performance management programme. Within the next two weeks, all staff will have personal targets relating to students' performance. Senior leaders have observed lessons and staff have welcomed the feedback. Staff also find helpful the feedback on their management of students' behaviour. A revised behaviour management policy will be in place soon, following discussions and debates with staff.

The new management committee brings together a small group of local professionals. They bring a wide range of leadership experience and expertise. They have very clear, high expectations for students' academic success, personal development and entitlement to good teaching and a good curriculum. They will meet termly. The newness of the arrangements mean that the committee did not

contribute to the improvement plan and has not yet started to monitor the unit's work formally. The management committee and the senior leadership team work collaboratively with local authority advisers, acknowledging not only the support but also the necessary external challenge they bring.

The senior leadership team acknowledge a slow start to addressing some of the issues identified for improvement. However, the right priorities were identified and acted upon with appropriate urgency. For example, as a result of your determination and with good support from the local authority's personnel team, the single central record of checks on staff is complete and accurate. Resolving issues relating to safeguarding students has quite rightly been at the forefront of your day-to-day work. This created a lot of extra work, which contributed to the slow start. Actions taken to develop other aspects of the unit's work are now gaining momentum.

The consultant quickly made sure that Year 11 students had the best possible chance to get the GCSE grades that they should. Additional out-of-hours tuition to cover the curriculum, practical tips for taking examinations, assiduously checking examination arrangements and getting students to examinations on time, gave students the opportunity to do well.

A revised curriculum will be in place for September 2015, particularly to improve the entitlement for Key Stage 4 students to do well in a wide range of subjects. Leaders are exploring partnerships with schools and pupil referral units to develop vocational subjects and to pool resources to deliver a wider range of subjects than is currently on offer. In addition, systems and structures to support teaching and behaviour management will be in place for the start of the autumn term 2015.

I am unable to comment about the quality of the learning environment across the unit but the Chilton Way site does not provide the good quality learning environment that students and staff are entitled to. Some furniture and walls are tatty, dirty or in need of repair. Some displays do not celebrate or support students' work sufficiently.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's 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 Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley  
Her Majesty's Inspector

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- The Secretary of State
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector