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17 July 2015

Mrs L Page and Mrs S Swann
Acting Headteachers
The Lindbergh Centre
Lindbergh Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP4 5ND

Dear Mrs Page and Mrs Swann,

No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Lindbergh Centre

Following my visit with Marianick Ellender-Gelé, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 15 July 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out in response to a complaint made to Ofsted which raised concerns about the centre. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, aspects of the quality of leadership and management at the centre and the behaviour of pupils.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, met with the acting headteachers, the centre manager, the lead teacher, the student manager, the education welfare officer from the local authority, the office manager and four students. They spoke to three parents, a representative of the local authority and a governor by phone. Inspectors looked at the school's documentation relating to self-evaluation, students' achievement, attendance and behaviour. They briefly visited classrooms, talked to students about their learning and looked at their work. Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire; there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire Parent View for inspectors to take them into account.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

The Lindbergh Centre provides education for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who are permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream school. Most students start at the centre when they are in Years 9, 10 or 11. At the time of the inspection, the Year 11 students had finished their studies and had left the centre. There were 31 students on roll; the proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding for disadvantaged students), is above average as is the proportion who have an education, health and care plan. The centre was moved to the current site from former unregistered premises in November 2013. Since then, there have been a number of changes in leadership and the premises have been significantly improved. The centre is now registered as part of the Parkside Pupil Referral Unit provision and has been led by Parkside's two acting headteachers since April 2014. Both acting headteachers are currently working full-time. Plans are in place for the centre and Parkside to become a multi-academy trust with Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit in the next academic year.

The centre's progress in relation to the issues that were raised

Procedures for safeguarding students meet requirements. The suitability of staff to be employed at the centre is checked appropriately. Leaders and staff understand the potential risks the students they are responsible for may be vulnerable to and training to ensure that students are protected from harm is up to date. There are robust examples of effective partnerships with a range of relevant agencies for example, social care services and the police. These provide extra support for students identified as being at risk. Students are taught about the risks they face and how to manage them. Students' behaviour is recorded and analysed in detail. However, this information is not used well enough to identify what triggers any incidents of misbehaviour, or the strategies that could be employed to reduce them.

Attendance has improved in the past year. Over half of the students at the centre now attend more regularly; this includes some who had very low attendance at their previous schools. The local authority education welfare officer works with leaders effectively to support families to get their children to school and takes rigorous action where it is necessary. Students are registered as they arrive at and leave the centre. While processes for recording their re-entry to school following their lunch break are cumbersome, they identify when students have not returned so that appropriate action can be taken.

There have been a number of changes over the last two years including several changes of leadership, the move to the new site, upgrading of the facilities, and the development of a different approach to how students are managed and taught. There have also been a number of changes to staffing. This, along with the reluctance of some staff to engage with the alterations to previous ways of working, and continuing uncertainties as the school moves to academy status, has resulted in

mixed and sometimes unclear expectations of students' behaviour and learning. The leadership team is now more stable and leaders demonstrate the capacity to lead improvement well. They have implemented more rigorous processes for managing the performance of staff and are endeavouring to hold them increasingly to account for both the achievement and the behaviour of the students they teach. Leaders acknowledge that they must continue to improve communication about the planned changes with all staff. During this inspection, where teaching reflected the new expectations, it was interesting and well matched to students' needs and they behaved well. Where teaching was less effective, students made less progress and their behaviour deteriorated.

The centre is still at an early stage in its development; leaders have worked hard to ensure that the premises are fit for purpose and that they are equipped with the appropriate technological and teaching resources. A range of innovative partners and members of the wider community are involved in work to ensure that students understand the expectations society will have of them. Employers are seen as key partners in helping the students into work. A pilot project is currently in place to test out new approaches for engaging students in learning that are relevant and accessible to them. It is early days but students said this new work can be interesting. They are learning how to develop their skills and manage their own learning. Through this project, they benefit from placements at other external providers, different work places, and from learning at school and at home. In instances where students do not have the skills or commitment to work independently, staff are not checking carefully enough that they are learning sufficiently or that they complete the work that is expected of them.

The new special educational needs coordinator has established a detailed induction process through which new students' learning and personal needs are analysed. This information is used to place students in small groups with adults who support their learning and personal needs as their mentors. It is also used to provide a baseline against which their progress is monitored. A new student said he felt these systems had helped him settle in to the centre and that he felt more relaxed and supported to engage with his learning.

The management committee has spent considerable time engaging in the processes necessary for the move to academy status. Its members have not had sufficiently detailed understanding of students' achievement and behaviour so have not been rigorous enough in the level of challenge made to leaders. Recent new appointments have brought increased expertise and an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the centre's work. Minutes of committee meetings show the increasing extent to which leaders are now held to account for the outcomes achieved by students. The member spoken to has an accurate understanding of the position of the centre and of the elements of its work that most need to improve.

External support

The local authority has responsibility for allocating places for students at the centre. Through the recently-established fair access panel, placements for students at risk of permanent exclusion are identified promptly. These procedures mean that for the first time, the centre will be almost at full capacity in September 2015. Leaders are carefully planning how to manage this larger intake to ensure a calm and effective start to the year.

A local authority adviser visits on a termly basis to review the work of the centre; this provides an external validation of the work of leaders. Good support and advice has been provided to help leaders manage the range of staffing issues.

Priorities for further improvement

- Use the information gathered about students' behaviour to identify and address the triggers for poor behaviour more effectively and to inform the management committee of the improvements being made.
- Ensure that rigorous procedures are in place, when the learning pilot is extended, to monitor students' learning, particularly when they are expected to work independently or are off site.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Management Committee. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority