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27 November 2015

Mrs Francesca Cannarella  
Interim Headteacher  
Kingston Centre (Primary PRU)  
Valley Park Campus  
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Wolverhampton  
WV6 0TD

Dear Mrs Cannarella

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

Following my visit to your school on 5 November 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 that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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 centre is taking effective action 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 Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Wolverhampton local authority.

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2015**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve so pupils are well motivated and challenged
  - improving the quality of marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve
  - training staff so that all have a good understanding of English and mathematics and know how to assess pupils' progress accurately.
- Ensure that pupils are kept safe by:
  - keeping all policies, procedures and staff training up to date
  - requiring them to attend school on a full time basis each day and that no part time or other arrangement is made by the centre where pupils do not have to attend education.
- Improve the progress of all pupils, and particularly that of the most able, so that it becomes at least good, especially in mathematics, reading and writing by:
  - ensuring assessments are accurate, especially in writing
  - making sure pupils have opportunities to use and apply their mathematical, writing and reading skills to a good or better standard when they complete work in the various subjects they study
  - training staff in teaching phonics (the sounds made by letters and words) and how to support pupils as their reading develops.
- Swiftly improve the behaviour of pupils who disrupt learning and so reduce the number of exclusions and ensure no learning time is lost by:
  - planning lessons and topics that motivate, interest and engage pupils
  - ensuring that teachers implement the school's behaviour policy consistently
  - providing training for staff so that they have the skills needed to manage behaviour effectively
  - only authorising absence where it is entirely necessary.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - taking urgent actions to appoint leaders for key areas of the school's work and establishing an effective senior leadership team
  - developing the system used to track pupils' progress, so it is clear how well all groups of pupils achieve, especially those pupils eligible for support

through the pupil premium, and using the results to hold teachers to account for the progress made by pupils in their charge

- ensuring that the management committee is well placed to ask challenging questions of leaders about the quality of provision
- ensuring a better focus on teaching pupils about British values and better preparing them for life in modern Britain
- ensuring all exclusions are formally recorded.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 5 November 2015**

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair and another member of the Management Committee, and a representative from the local authority. I spoke with pupils and staff on my tour around the centre.

### **Context**

Following the departure of the previous interim headteacher in June 2015, a consultant headteacher led the centre for the final weeks of the summer term. The current interim headteacher started at the centre in September 2015. A permanent headteacher has been appointed and begins his role in January 2016. The management committee has wisely decided to enable a period of handover between the interim and permanent headteachers during the first six weeks of 2016.

There are currently three members of staff absent from the centre and their work is being covered by existing members of staff. There have been no further staff changes since my last monitoring inspection in June 2015.

From September 2015, the centre stopped admitting dual-registered pupils and started six-weekly, multi-agency review meetings for all pupils in October 2015. The school day was restructured at the start of the autumn term 2015 in order to reduce the amount of unstructured time available to pupils. The interim headteacher has introduced pupil focus plans, which contain all the necessary information staff need in order to provide the pupils with a good-quality education. There are currently 10 pupils on the roll of the centre.

The management committee is currently considering future options for the centre's designation.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

There is evidence of improving pupil outcomes in English and mathematics. Higher expectations of staff mean that they are providing pupils with work that challenges them to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills in these key areas. Senior staff analyse pupil performance information at an individual and group level to ensure pupils are making the progress they should. Where pupils are not learning as quickly as the centre would like, senior leaders are challenging staff to find ways to better support the pupil.

Current pupil performance information shows that pupils are making better progress in writing and mathematics. The majority of pupils eligible for pupil premium have made expected or above-expected progress in writing, reading and mathematics during the first part of the autumn 2015 term.

Until very recently, the centre had not received pupil premium funding to which relevant pupils are entitled. This has now been resolved and the centre staff have plans for how this money is going to be spent in order to improve pupil outcomes. The pupil premium review that was instructed to happen at the inspection in February 2015 has not yet taken place. Now that the funding has been allocated to the centre, this review must be undertaken within the next 12 working weeks.

Staff training has taken place in the areas of pupil questioning, assessment, increasing expectations and in the new curriculum. This has helped to promote pupil learning.

During my visits to classrooms, I observed all pupils working effectively with varying levels of staff support. Staff members reported to me that the centre now provides a much calmer teaching environment and this is promoting the learning of pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Pupil focus plans are helping staff to provide learning activities that both engage and enthuse pupils. The plans provide personalised targets that enable pupils, teachers and parents to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The plans are providing a consistent tracking and monitoring process for pupil progress. This enables the next steps of the pupils' development to be made clear to everyone. The needs, wants and wishes of pupils are now better taken into account.

The centre uses a structured assessment system for checking pupil progress in English and mathematics. Teachers and support staff are finding this a useful system for supporting their improving quality of teaching.

Communication between teachers and teaching assistants about pupils' learning and the lessons they provide is much improved since my last visit. Changes to pupils' transport arrangements have created time for staff to meet together. This change to the centre's work is resulting in the improved quality of teaching, learning and assessment practice.

The new spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision policy, new curriculum design, frequent assemblies and new British values statement are combining to allow pupils the opportunity to develop their individual characters in order to become responsible citizens in modern Britain. Pupils and staff take part in regular charity events and the

centre is able to describe how these activities are having a positive impact on the pupils.

A new marking policy has been introduced. This piece of work has resulted in the marking of pupils' work being much improved. Pupils like the new marking system and they told me that it helps them to understand the next steps in their learning.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The purpose of the Kingston Centre is to move pupils into appropriate schools at the right time. The pupil focus plans contain useful information about the readiness of pupils to move on to their next placement.

The pupil focus plans contain improved risk assessments for individual pupils. These assessments are updated frequently and provide clear direction for the staff team in how to avoid serious incidents and respond effectively when they do occur.

All pupils now receive full-time education from the centre. A small number of pupils receive full-time curriculum support from Kingston Centre staff in their own homes.

The revised behaviour policy is clearly understood by the staff team. Behaviour is improving, but there is still a significant number of incidents, which result in physical interventions by staff. However, due to the increasing confidence of staff, there are fewer behaviour referrals to senior managers than at the time of my previous visit. Exclusions are formally recorded and there is a reduced number of fixed-term exclusions compared with this time last year. Non-attendance is only authorised by the interim headteacher when it is entirely necessary.

An updated safeguarding policy has been developed by senior leaders and approved by the management committee. Staff training about the safeguarding of pupils is of a good quality. Files related to the safeguarding of pupils demonstrate that the centre makes timely referrals to other agencies in relation to child protection concerns.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The current interim headteacher has re-energised the centre's work towards its aim of being an effective pupil referral unit. She has quickly gained the confidence of staff and pupils alike by listening to their views and then offering appropriate levels of support and challenge to them.

Pupil focus plans form the basis of the new six-weekly review meetings about individual pupils with parents and professional partners, such as local authority

officers. The centre is enabling the successful transition of pupils to other provision as a result of these meetings and resultant work.

Performance management has improved for teachers. Targets for teachers are now clearly linked to pupil progress and there is no ambiguity about the quality of work that is expected of them. The appraisal process for support staff has been developed and is due to start soon. All staff have been given additional responsibilities in order to speed up the improvement of the centre. This is proving an effective strategy and, as a result, many aspects of the centre's work are getting better. A good example is the improvement in the centre's provision for literacy.

The management committee's constitution conforms with the instructions set out in the Department for Education guidance *Alternative Provision: statutory guidance for local authorities* (2103). However, there are too many vacancies on the committee for it to function as effectively as it could. The committee meets regularly and keeps a watchful eye on the finances of the centre. It has recently submitted a school financial value statement to the local authority which demonstrated a sound system for the appropriate use of the centre's funding.

The review of governance highlighted in the February 2015 inspection has not yet taken place. This must be conducted immediately.

Leaders at all levels have a greater understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement required by the centre. The centre action plan is now fit for purpose but the management committee, in collaboration with senior leaders, must ensure that the plan continues to be sharply focused on the next actions to be taken by the centre.

The local authority's statement of action, centre improvement plan, management committee's work and the actions of centre staff must all now be joined together into a framework that rapidly improves outcomes for pupils further.

### **External support**

The local authority has not conducted the reviews of its statement of action when it said it would. The statement of action has therefore not been updated to reflect the current position of the centre.

In collaboration with the interim headteacher, the local authority has ensured that the wider systems, such as admissions and educational psychology support, are in place to support the improvement of the centre. The local authority has undertaken a satisfactory audit of the centre's safeguarding children work.

The support that was due to be provided by an outstanding primary school has not happened.