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9 March 2016

Mr Adam Price  
Kingston Centre (Primary PRU)  
Valley Park Campus  
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Wolverhampton  
West Midlands  
WV6 0TD

Dear Mr Price

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Kingston Centre (Primary PRU)**

Following my visit to your school on 24 February 2016, 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 third 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:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Management, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Wolverhampton City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

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 third monitoring inspection on 24 February 2016**

### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the new headteacher, deputy headteacher, two members of staff and a representative from the local authority. I spoke with two pupils during a meeting and spoke with others on my tour around the centre. I held a telephone conversation with the interim Chair of the Management Committee. This inspection focused upon leadership and management due to the turbulence in leadership over the last year.

### **Context**

The permanent headteacher, appointed during the summer term 2015, took up his post in January 2016 as planned. The management committee wisely decided to enable the interim headteacher, who worked at the centre during the autumn term 2015, to stay working at the centre during January and February 2016.

Due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, the chair of the management committee has temporarily stepped down from this position. The interim headteacher has taken on this role on a temporary basis. The previous vice-chair of the management committee is no longer part of the governance arrangements of the centre; a new vice-chair has been appointed. A parent representative has now joined the management committee.

There have been improvements in the attendance of staff who have been absent from work for a considerable length of time.

The number of pupils on roll has increased since the last monitoring inspection.

The management committee has taken the decision to become a sponsored academy. This change is due to take place on 1 May 2016. The sponsor is Northern House School Academy Trust. The sponsor is also responsible for Northern House School, City of Wolverhampton, which shares the same site and building as the Kingston Centre.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The new headteacher has made a successful start to his tenure at the Kingston Centre. He has already established his credibility with staff and pupils by using his excellent interpersonal skills to build their trust. Staff have been energised to improve their work further. One member of staff told the inspector that they feel 'professionally challenged' by the headteacher and that his meetings are 'run with precision and focused on pupils'.

The previous interim headteacher, who is now the interim chair of the management committee, is credited by senior staff and the local authority as having played a significant lead role in the many improvements at the Kingston Centre. Evidence from this monitoring inspection supports these views.

The management committee has gone through a period of turbulence due to the unavailability of the chairperson. This situation was unavoidable; the disruption has not slowed the rate of improvement because other members of the management committee, the local authority and senior staff at the centre have worked well together. The management committee has reviewed all statutory policies and put in place an identified cycle for their review. They have ensured that all pupils receive full-time education and are going through the review of governance process with an external advisor.

Since the last monitoring inspection, leaders have improved the performance management arrangements for staff. Leaders now complete more observations of staff teaching pupils; they frequently check the progress of pupils by looking at workbooks; they analyse the progress pupils make over time and then challenge the staff to further improve rates of progress. Leaders' work in this area is improving pupils' progress in key areas of the curriculum.

Since the last monitoring inspection, leaders have improved the processes for planning the next steps in pupils' education. The Kingston Centre now provides short-stay provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion or pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school. Some pupils are dual-registered and are referred for bespoke outreach support from the centre. These placements are limited to 12 weeks. As a result of the management committee and senior staff being clear about what the Kingston Centre offers to pupils, they have established a six-weekly review meeting to plan for the each pupil's exit from the centre. Most pupils now have an indication of their next steps in education and this, in turn, helps them to improve their behaviour.

Senior leaders have worked diligently to promote links with outside agencies to support all aspects of pupils' development and well-being. While these are still at an early stage of development, they are already sustaining the successful reintegration of pupils into mainstream settings.

The deputy headteacher has demonstrated a significant commitment to improving the centre since the full inspection in February 2015, which placed the Kingston Centre in special measures. She is currently completing the nationally led programme of training as a special educational needs coordinator. Her increased level of skills and knowledge in this area means that pupils are getting a better quality of provision at the centre. This is because their needs are identified well and then plans are put in place to meet those needs and improve their outcomes.

Key staff now have management responsibilities including: attendance; behaviour

and safety; curriculum; spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; and outreach provision. Pupils now get a better quality of education because staff are clear about what is expected of them. They put in place systems which make a positive difference to pupils. The lead member of staff for the outreach provision reported that the centre is running 'like a school should'.

Leaders have ensured that the raising attainment plan for the centre includes all the necessary actions needed to improve the progress of pupils and specific timescales of when each action will be completed. The plan is supporting the aspirations of leaders to improve the provision quickly.

Leaders have been tenacious in establishing how the centre can access the pupil premium funding to which pupils are entitled. The centre started to receive the funds in February 2016. Leaders acted swiftly and implemented a system for checking how the spending of this money is having an impact on pupils' learning and development. It is too early to establish if this work is yet having the necessary impact.

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

The good use of pupil-focus plans at the time of the last monitoring inspection has been built upon further. Teachers provide pupils with personalised targets that enable them to have a clear understanding about what is expected of them. The plans provide staff with useful information about pupils' progress. The next steps for pupils are now well thought through and mean that pupils' progress is improving.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. They value the opportunities they have to talk with one another before and after the school day about the needs of pupils. The inspector observed teaching assistants engaging individual pupils in appropriately focused activities which helped them to make progress.

The marking policy, introduced during the autumn term 2015, has been effectively implemented by the staff team. Pupils are very clear about what the marking system is and how it helps them make progress. They like how teachers use different coloured pens to indicate what the comments in their books mean. During the inspection, the inspector looked at several examples of pupils' books; all of the marking observed was of a good quality and provided useful feedback for pupils.

Good relationships between staff and pupils results in a positive environment to promote learning. Pupils say that 'staff encourage us to do a lot' and that 'we learn a lot more things at this school'.

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

One pupil told the inspector that 'everyone at the Kingston Centre is equal' and that

'this school is better than every other school'. When referring to the staff team, another pupil told the inspector that 'they don't tell you that you are naughty, they help you'. The culture of the centre is much improved and supporting pupils' personal development.

During their time at the centre, most pupils become courteous and supportive of each other. They develop ways to manage their own behaviour successfully. The number of behavioural incidents that have required the physical intervention of staff has reduced substantially since the beginning of the autumn term 2015. As a result of the good-quality plans that have been put in place for managing each pupil's behaviour, staff are better equipped to respond to significant incidents appropriately.

The number of fixed-term exclusions is significantly lower than during the last two academic years because the behaviour policy is clearly understood by the staff team.

The overall attendance of pupils has improved compared to the last academic year. There are rigorous processes in place to support any pupils who have attendance issues. Leaders work closely with the education welfare officer to ensure that absence is followed up and acted upon. Where necessary, the centre's leaders refer individual pupils for support via the local authority's early help assessment process.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The information analysed by the centre's leaders about the progress pupils make indicates that most pupils are making or exceeding the progress expected of them in writing, reading and mathematics. However, due to the very small number of pupils on roll and the high levels of support pupils receive, the centre understands that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils make the progress expected of them.

The progress made by pupils during the current academic year compared to last year has improved significantly.

Leaders wisely compare the progress made by different groups of pupils. Due to the small number of pupils and the personalised education on offer at the centre, there is no identifiable group of pupils that do less well than others. Where an individual is identified as not making the progress expected of them, leaders are quick to ensure that plans are in place to address any issues.

### **External support**

Following the last monitoring inspection, the local authority undertook its own review about the quality of the centre's work. This review was helpful to the centre's leaders and provided them with a detailed report from which to develop

further improvement plans. The report highlights several recommendations for improvement, an example being to re-establish the school council to ensure that pupils contribute to key policies and reviews.

Current school leaders are very appreciative of the support provided by the local authority school improvement advisor. She has challenged the centre to improve, and been sensitive to the support needed by staff and pupils during the challenging period since the centre was put into special measures. Her approach has helped the centre to improve its work.

**Priority for further improvement:**

- Ensure that the centre continues to work effectively with education, health and social care services to improve outcomes for pupils.