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24 October 2015

Mr S Welding and Mrs A Gardner  
Interim headteachers  
Kingsfield Centre  
Chilton Way  
Stowmarket  
Suffolk  
IP14 1SZ

Dear Mr Welding and Mrs Gardner

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

Following my visit to your pupil referral unit on 8 October 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 pupil referral unit's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the pupil referral unit became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement which 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 unit is not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The unit 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 Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Urgently improve the safeguarding of all pupils by:
  - ensuring that all the safer recruitment checks required by law are carried out and recorded on the centre's single central record
  - recording all serious incidents in detail, including when restraining of pupils is used, as quickly as possible and ensuring that these records are rigorously monitored by a designated member of the senior leadership team.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including the management committee, by:
  - thoroughly evaluating the centre's work to gain a full understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and putting in place detailed plans to improve it across all sites
  - holding senior leaders fully to account for securing rapid improvements in raising pupils' achievement and improving behaviour
  - increasing the rigour and frequency of procedures to monitor pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance
  - improving the timing and quality of assessing pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding, and their emotional health and well-being on entry to the centre and using this information to plan learning suited to their specific needs
  - ensuring that the quality of teaching and assessment is monitored systematically and analysing this information to gauge the impact of teaching on raising achievement of all pupils
  - ensuring that all statutory policies and procedures are in place, up to date and reflected in practice.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching and providing staff with high quality training and support so that they teach consistently well
  - gaining a common agreement amongst staff about what good teaching looks like, and then rigorously monitoring that all teachers apply these practices in all lessons
  - ensuring that all staff use the agreed procedures to manage pupils' behaviour
  - taking every opportunity during lessons to reinforce pupils' basic skills
  - implementing a programme to teach pupils with low levels of literacy how to read and write well.
  
- Improve the behaviour and safety of all pupils across all sites belonging to the centre by:
  - reviewing the centre's policy and procedures for managing pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons

- implementing a range of strategies to most effectively manage challenging behaviour, so reducing the number of pupils excluded from the centre and keeping pupils engaged in learning
  - preventing pupils from smoking during the school day.
- Raise achievement by:
- improving procedures to tackle persistent absence so that pupils regularly attend lessons and engage fully in learning
  - putting in place aspirational targets for all individual pupils to attain in each subject, based on their different starting points
  - adding rigour to procedures used to track how well pupils are progressing in all subjects and taking prompt action where there are signs of underachievement
  - monitoring the impact extra funding received for disadvantaged pupils, and to improve sports education, is having on the achievement and engagement of pupils.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 8 October 2015**

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the unit's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with one of the new interim headteachers, the acting deputy headteacher, the Key Stage 4 leader, the pastoral manager, teaching and non-teaching staff, two members of the management committee and the local authority leader for standards and excellence. The inspector scrutinised the single central register of checks on the suitability of staff to work with students.

### **Context**

The interim executive headteacher left the unit at the end of the summer term. Since the beginning of the autumn term, two interim headteachers share the leadership of the unit. There is an acting deputy headteacher and a new member of staff in the office. Two members of staff are on long-term sick leave and two have returned from long-term sick leave. Three additional members joined the management committee during the autumn term.

Since September, the unit operates solely on the Chilton Way site and for Key Stage 4 students only. At the end of August, the Bury 1 site and the K46 site closed and students in Key Stages 2 and 3 transferred to other pupil referral units or schools. There are currently six students on roll. Students were not educated on-site until 21 September and were given work to complete at home until that date. Students with medical needs have received no education since the beginning of term.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

For most students across the unit, academic progress during the 2014–15 year was not good enough. This was partly because students did not study a sufficiently wide range of subjects but also because of weak teaching. There was some accelerated progress during the summer term but not enough to make up for the gaps in students' learning. All students in Key Stage 4 went on to college.

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

It was not possible to observe teaching formally during this inspection because, for most of the day, only one student was on site. However, a tour of classrooms and corridors shows that the learning environment has improved significantly. Classrooms are bright, clean and well organised. Displays celebrate students' work and other achievements, such as improved attendance. A new library and a reorganised IT (information technology) room enhance students' opportunities for reading and research. Discussions with some teaching staff indicate that lessons are planned appropriately with some good resources to support teaching.

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

There is no analysis of students' personal development since the first monitoring inspection. The acting deputy headteacher has revised the procedures for recording students' inappropriate behaviour, restraint and sanctions so that future analysis and evaluation is possible. So far this term, some students have achieved 100% attendance. All six students have increased their attendance. There have been no restraints or exclusions so far this term.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

Although a lot of work has taken place since the first monitoring inspection, the actions taken are not impacting sufficiently on the weaknesses identified in the previous full inspection. Actions that were to be completed last term remain incomplete:

- Additional checks for the suitability of staff to work with students were undertaken recently because not all evidence of previous checks was in staff files.
- The single central record is incomplete.
- Teachers do not have performance management targets that set out leaders' high expectations clearly enough and this has slowed the monitoring of teaching.
- The behaviour policy was only recently completed, although staff have been consulted fully.
- The safeguarding policy was revised but is not aligned with current guidance.
- The unit's new action plan takes account of the support from the local authority's plan but the two plans are not yet sufficiently aligned.

The new leadership team are building on the work that started last term to establish high aspirations for the performance of staff and students. The new team are systematically making sure that the systems to support assessment, teaching and performance management are understood clearly and implemented appropriately. There is a very clearly stated expectation from leaders that the unit must provide students and staff with a learning environment and ethos that is in line with good mainstream secondary education. However, there remain some important issues to resolve as a matter of urgency so that leaders focus sufficiently on improving teaching and students' outcomes:

- The proposed conversion of the unit to a sponsored academy remains the preferred option for the unit's future, but the age range, number of admissions and purpose of the proposed provision have not been agreed.
- The inappropriate use and storage of confidential information is being addressed, but more work is needed to make sure that records are well kept and systematically checked.
- The unit's current financial position is unclear.
- The unit's website is being reconstructed and currently provides no information for parents or others.

A new curriculum is in place for Key Stage 4 students. This increases students' opportunities to study GCSEs and vocational courses. However, the length of the day is too short to provide sufficient time to teach all subjects well and to give students the same opportunities as their mainstream peers.

The speed at which decisions were taken to close two of the sites, and to move students in Key Stages 2 and 3 to other provision, was unhelpful to the students, their families and the staff. Parents received conflicting information about the arrangements for the start of term. Key Stage 4 students did not start on site until 21 September. The students with medical needs have received no education this term because of a misunderstanding between the unit and the local authority about who was responsible for their education from September. These students will receive tuition at home from the unit's staff for five hours a week from 12 October, but this is too late and too little to meet their needs and entitlements. Students were taken off roll too soon and it is not clear whether all students have permanent, full-time education. This is being followed up as a matter of urgency.

The late appointment of the two interim headteachers, two days before the start of term, was unhelpful. There was no handover between the previous executive headteacher and the two new interim headteachers. Staff, students and their families did not know of the new arrangements until the first day of term.

Despite a difficult start to the term, staff are very positive and the six students on roll have settled quickly to the new arrangements. Staff value the contact with the Chair of the Management Committee to gather their views and to explain the changes. Staff appreciate the benefits of working together on one site and welcome the recent opportunities to work alongside colleagues in mainstream schools. They acknowledge the clear purpose and high expectations from senior staff and the management committee.

The management committee continues to provide strong challenge about the unit's future, budget plans and staff performance. The members ask for additional information when needed, such as deeper analysis of examination results and a clear picture of whether pupil premium funding was spent appropriately. They ask the right questions, such as why students who did well in one subject did poorly in another and why the students start so late and finish so early each day. However, and in common with the School Improvement Board, too little time is spent discussing the impact of the unit's work on improving the outcomes for students. This weakness is recognised by the management committee. Sub-committees will be established this term to focus on specific aspects of the unit's performance, such as the quality of teaching and students' outcomes.

## **External support**

Relationships between leaders at the unit and local authority officers have been strained since the first monitoring inspection. There is agreement that support from the local authority has not always been of sufficiently high quality. Staff at the unit had conflicting advice and not all work was followed up appropriately by local authority advisers. The local authority adviser now linked to the unit will provide continuity of support from this term. Now that the unit has appropriate structures in place to underpin the work of the staff, local authority support will focus on reviewing and challenging progress and evaluating how well leaders hold staff to account for improving students' outcomes.

The local authority is funding an additional member of staff in the unit office.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- As a matter of urgency, determine the future purpose and provision of the unit.
- Increase the amount of teaching time so that students have the same entitlement as their peers in mainstream schools or academies.
- Provide access to a full-time educational programme, as appropriate, for each student with medical needs.