

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



31 March 2016

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 March 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 which have been taken since the pupil referral unit's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third 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 the 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 third monitoring inspection on 8 March 2016**

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with the two interim headteachers, the two acting deputy headteachers, the pastoral manager, teaching and non-teaching staff, the new chair of the management committee and a group of pupils. Telephone discussions were held with the chief executive officer for Olive Academies and the local authority lead standards and excellence officer. The inspector scrutinised the single central register of checks on staff's suitability to work with pupils.

### **Context**

The two interim headteachers continue to lead the unit. A second acting deputy headteacher, a member of staff from Olive Academies, was appointed from January 2016. Eleven staff, which is almost half of the permanent staff, are absent from work as a result of long-term sick leave or suspension. Until very recently, there was no permanent chair of the management committee.

The unit continues to operate solely on the Chilton Way site and for key stage 4 pupils only. There are 14 pupils on roll. Since the previous monitoring inspection, one pupil left and five new pupils joined the unit. Five pupils with medical needs who had been removed from the unit's roll in error have been readmitted.

The unit will convert to an academy on 1 June 2016, sponsored by Olive Academies, a multi-academy trust. The consultation process has not yet taken place.

The inspector was aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

The academic performance of pupils for the first half of this academic year is not good enough. Pupils' performance has declined. Most pupils in Year 11 are not on track to gain the GCSE grades that they are capable of. The reasons for pupils' underperformance are poor-quality teaching overall, related to staff absence and staff competency, and pupils' absence.

All pupils have a full-time programme. The length of the unit's day was extended appropriately from November 2015 so that pupils have five hours of teaching each day. Some of the pupils with medical needs have a reduced timetable in agreement

with medical professionals. A full-time programme is available when they are ready for it.

The curriculum has been revised appropriately to give pupils the chance to gain five GCSEs and, for some, relevant vocational qualifications. The curriculum will give pupils the opportunity to gain the qualifications they need to go on to college but not necessarily to reach their potential or to go on to a course at the appropriate level.

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

Senior leaders and the local authority lead standards and excellence officer have monitored the quality of teaching and assessment frequently and rigorously since the previous monitoring inspection. As a result, some staff are absent and some staff have improved their performance. During this monitoring inspection, teaching and learning took place in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Teaching staff successfully encourage pupils to participate by posing sensitive yet direct questions, which supports those who find it difficult to contribute, particularly well. This helps teachers follow up pupils' misconceptions or lack of understanding.

Now that assessments of pupils' performance are frequent and reliable, teachers have the information they need to plan for pupils' individual needs. Currently, staff are adapting the work covered in lessons so that gaps in knowledge relating to the GCSE syllabuses are addressed.

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

Pupils' behaviour during this monitoring inspection was often good. Pupils respond well to prompts from staff. Staff focus appropriately on learning and respect for one another. Pupils with medical needs and those with other learning needs work well together. The increase in the number of pupils on roll gives good opportunities for pupils with different needs to work cooperatively in groups. Pupils are rising to the challenge of learning and socialising together appropriately.

A new behaviour system started two weeks ago. It is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of the rewards and sanctions but some staff do not reward pupils frequently enough for good behaviour. There have been no exclusions this term.

Pupils' attendance has improved. Good collaboration between staff and the unit's educational welfare officer has made a significant difference to the attendance of some pupils.

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

It is a year since inspectors judged that the unit required special measures. There has been a lot for interim leaders to deal with throughout the past year, particularly regarding pupils' safety and the quality of teaching. Senior leaders, the management committee and local authority officers agree that there is still a significant amount of work to do to make sure that pupils achieve adequately. The changes are sound and

are starting to put the unit in the right position to improve at a faster pace. But pupils do not yet reap sufficient benefit from the actions taken.

Most of the actions taken since the previous monitoring inspection focus on strategic development. There is less to do that is of a reactive nature. As a result:

- information is used by leaders to challenge staff performance to greater effect
- the performance management arrangements for teachers are up to date
- changes have been made to the curriculum
- safeguarding concerns are picked up quickly
- pupils' attendance and behaviour are tracked thoroughly
- new arrangements are in place to support a robust procedure for pupils' admission and induction to the unit
- plans are in place to allocate and track the pupil premium funding
- the unit's financial position has improved and a deficit has turned into a healthy surplus
- the unit's website has been reconstructed recently and provides useful and up-to-date information for parents and others
- the single central record is complete for the checks on staff currently working at the school; arrangements are in place to complete the follow-up checks for those on long-term absence, when they return to work.

These developments reinforce the clear and determined leadership of the interim leaders. Staff who currently teach and lead the unit are now in a much better position to make the changes needed but it has taken too long to get this far. Staff absence means that too few carry an increasing share of the workload. As a result, the difference that these things make to pupils' achievements is not enough for this point in the unit's journey to remove special measures.

Meetings of, and reports for, the management committee and the school improvement board now focus on whether pupils benefit sufficiently from the actions taken. It took some time for the management committee to appoint a new chair but interim arrangements made sure that the challenge to senior leaders remained strong.

Plans for the unit to convert to an academy are well advanced. But time is short to complete all the work needed to ensure a smooth transition. For example, the formal consultation has not started and arrangements for leadership, the curriculum and the use of the accommodation are not finalised. Accordingly, staff, parents and pupils do not know the details of what will happen. For staff, this creates uncertainty and anxiety. Staff are supportive of one another and of senior leaders but, quite rightly, want some certainty about future arrangements.

## **External support**

The local authority's statement of action has been revised and works in tandem with the unit's action plan. Support from the lead standards and excellence officer, the education welfare officer, the human resources department and officers advising on safeguarding arrangements is particularly valued by staff. Their support has helped to improve the systems for tracking pupils' progress and well-being.

On some occasions recently, staff have not had all of the information they need from local authority officers prior to admitting pupils. As a result, the transition for some was not as good as it should have been.

Olive Academies is working in partnership with local authority officers to make a smooth transition from a unit to an academy. The appointment of a second acting deputy headteacher is funded by the local authority.