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11 July 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 16 June 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 pupil referral unit's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the pupil referral unit 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 not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

The pupil referral unit may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 16 June 2016**

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the pupil referral unit's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with the interim deputy headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher (who is also the special educational needs coordinator), the pastoral manager, the executive headteacher from Olive Academies Trust, the business manager, 13 members of staff, and the local authority lead standards and excellence officer. Telephone calls were made to the chief executive officer of Olive Academies Trust, the chair of the management committee, one of the interim headteachers and two parents. The inspector scrutinised the single central register of checks on staff suitability to work with pupils.

### **Context**

As at the previous monitoring inspection, the unit is led by two interim headteachers, an acting deputy headteacher and an interim deputy headteacher. The conversion of the referral unit to an academy sponsored by Olive Academies Trust has been agreed by the Department for Education but the conversion did not take place on the planned date, 1 June 2016. The local authority and the trust expect that the conversion will now take place by 1 August 2016 at the latest. The unit will be renamed Olive AP Academy – Suffolk (Central). On conversion, the interim deputy headteacher will become the headteacher of the new academy.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, two pupils have joined the unit. There are currently 17 pupils on roll. Staff absence, related to long-term sickness or suspension, remains high. The unit continues to operate solely on the Chilton Way site and for key stage 4 pupils only.

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

Although the pace of change has quickened, the difference that the changes make to teaching and pupils' achievements is still not strong enough to suggest that special measures can be removed within the two-year time period from the previous full inspection. There are too few suitably qualified or experienced teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively. In addition, there are no subject coordinators, and this limits the necessary developments of the curriculum, including English and science.

The right systems are in place for managing pupils' behaviour, checking how well they achieve and admitting new pupils, but the procedures are not yet applied consistently enough. For example, the achievements of Year 11 pupils are tracked thoroughly but those for Year 10 are not. The behaviour system, new at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, is well understood by staff and pupils but information about rewards gained by pupils is not shared widely or frequently.

Development of the curriculum throughout this year gave Year 11 pupils the opportunity to achieve more GCSEs than those in Year 11 last year. Plans to develop the curriculum further from September 2016 include the addition of qualifications in construction, physical education, public services and catering. The high aspiration for pupils to study all subjects at GCSE level (or equivalent) is central to the changes.

Interim leaders, the local authority and the trust are determined that the conversion of the unit to an academy will take place as soon as possible. Arrangements are almost complete but the delay creates additional uncertainty for staff, parents and pupils. Although it has been a difficult year, staff show considerable resilience in maintaining a positive atmosphere for pupils. Staff are a strong team and very supportive of one another. Many have stepped up to take additional responsibilities, including teaching English. Their work has successfully maintained good relationships with parents and pupils. In particular, the work with Year 11 pupils and their parents made sure that GCSE examinations were completed efficiently and effectively.

Effective partnerships between local authority advisers, senior leaders and the management committee mean that all share an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the unit's work. Senior leaders provide the management committee and the school improvement board with clear information about pupils' achievements and staff performance.

Arrangements to safeguard pupils remain thorough. The acting deputy headteacher continues to ensure that the single central record of employment checks contains only the information that has been verified from staff files.

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

During this academic year, teaching and assessments have not been of a high enough quality for pupils to reach their potential. This is mostly because the unit has not had sufficient or consistent staff to deliver the curriculum.

In the run-up to GCSE examinations, additional teachers came from local schools to teach lessons in English and science to help cover the syllabus. More generally, staff prepared Year 11 pupils well so that they could answer examination questions thoroughly and confidently. The special educational needs coordinator and the pastoral manager made sure that pupils had additional support during examinations if entitled to it. These things worked well to reduce pupils' anxieties so that they could take the formal examinations and answer the questions as best they could.

Staff absence means that pupils are often taught by non-specialist teachers or by too many different staff. Timetables often change from day to day. When pupils are taught by a consistent set of experienced staff, good relationships develop and pupils feel secure and concentrate well. When this happens, pupils learn well because teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are planned well to keep

pupils interested and active. When too many different staff teach subjects or when the timetable is unpredictable, pupils lose confidence and often become anxious, which gets in the way of their learning. Understandably, teachers also find the unpredictability difficult, particularly for planning lessons.

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

Some pupils have made good progress this year in moderating their behaviour and gaining confidence to do things that they find difficult or stressful. In general, incidents of inappropriate behaviour have reduced. There has been one short temporary exclusion since the previous monitoring inspection. Attendance for most pupils has improved over this academic year. Pupils do not smoke on the school site.

This term, staff produced a special needs action plan for each pupil. These plans focus on removing the barriers to good behaviour and learning. It is too soon to say how well this is working but does demonstrate staff's good understanding of pupils' emotional and mental health needs.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

With a few exceptions, Year 11 pupils are not predicted to achieve the GCSE grades that they are capable of. There is not enough information to assess how well Year 10 pupils have achieved this year.

Work on display and in pupils' books shows some good learning this term, such as the GCSE examination work for art, pupils' analysis of the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, work on angles and scientific enquiry. A culture of learning is successfully established; staff expect pupils to participate and pupils take seriously their responsibilities as learners.

### **External support**

Interim leaders, the trust, the management committee and local authority officers have undertaken their respective responsibilities well since the previous monitoring inspection. Although they are not always in agreement about ways forward, collaboration is professional and with the best interest of the pupils at heart. They share the frustration about the amount of time taken to resolve issues for conversion to an academy and that required to resolve the complex issues regarding staff competency.

Some of the planned support from the local authority for teaching and assessment, and leadership and management, has not taken place. This is because of the absence of staff at the unit or staff not allocated to middle leadership roles.