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Mr Martin Ridge  
Westfields Pupil Referral Unit  
The Field Hill Centre  
Batley Field Hill  
Batley  
West Yorkshire  
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Dear Mr Ridge

### **Short inspection of Westfields Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)**

Following my visit to the school on 5 April 2017 with Chris Campbell, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked tirelessly to ensure good provision for pupils who have long-term medical needs, particularly relating to their mental health. You have worked with equal determination to ensure that secondary schools improve the provision they make for pupils at risk of exclusion. Crucially, you have not taken your eye off the impact of your school's work on pupils who attend the Westfields site for varying lengths of time. In developing these three strands of critically important work, you have been ably supported by a growing team of senior and middle leaders.

Pupils who are placed at Westfields, either because they have been permanently excluded or because they are at risk of exclusion, continue to make good progress. Progress in their personal development and behaviour is particularly strong. Almost all pupils improve their attendance significantly. For the majority of pupils, the frequency of incidents of inappropriate behaviour reduces well. A good proportion of the pupils return to mainstream schools and, of these, a majority sustain their places successfully. This is because you and your skilled staff team instil in pupils a desire to learn and to develop skills to manage their own behaviour. Most pupils also make small but important steps of progress in English and mathematics during their time with you. Most make more progress in practical subjects, such as design technology and physical education.

Pupils whose medical needs prevent them from attending school also benefit from the teaching provided. Parents of these pupils appreciate how your team plans work to help the pupils keep up to speed with English and mathematics. They also appreciate how you have responded to their concerns about the consistency of staff working with their children.

Senior leaders and the management committee have an accurate understanding of what the school does well. As a result, you have identified the key priorities for further development effectively. We agreed that an additional area of development should be to help all teachers to encourage pupils to write at greater length. This is critically important, as completing written tasks is a high hurdle that many pupils face when returning to mainstream school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Records show that staff know when to report concerns about pupils. Records also show that leaders take the right actions and work effectively with other agencies. Occasionally, leaders could be more relentless in their challenge to other services about the appropriateness of the support provided to pupils facing very complex challenges. Pupils indicate in the school's own surveys that they feel safe when they are at school. Parents in similar surveys confirm this view. Work in pupils' books and on display shows how pupils learn to keep themselves safe in different ways. This includes learning about the consequences of risky choices and behaviours. Parents receive helpful guidance about how to support their children. For example, the family cookery programme gives parents the opportunity to cook with their child and learn how staff use everyday activities to talk with children about safe choices.

During the inspection, I explored the improvements in pupils' attendance with you and other leaders. Records show that the majority of pupils improve their attendance while at Westfields. This includes a third of pupils whose attendance improves by 20% or more. I also checked the use of partial timetables. You follow medical guidance appropriately for pupils who have medical needs. For some, this leads to increasing the amount of time that they are able to engage in learning, including some time spent on school sites. This is a significant achievement for the pupils who face complex mental health issues. Partial timetables are used for some pupils placed at Westfields, particularly for pupils who have had extended periods of absence from their previous schools. You ensure that everything is put in place to move the pupils onto full timetables as soon as possible.

We also explored how staff manage pupils safely when pupils' behaviour risks harming either the pupils themselves or other people. The detailed records indicate that you have a very safe and effective approach to this aspect of your work. If a physical restraint is used, records include pupils' views about what led to the incident. This information is then used to help staff to understand why the incident happened and develop plans to help pupils to learn better ways to manage their emotions and responses.

## Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I had a detailed look at how successful you have been in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The inclusion workers (teaching assistants), now have greater clarity about their roles. They described how much they have benefited from the training that you have provided. Leaders from secondary schools described how these skilful staff support pupils returning to mainstream schools and how this supports the development of their staff. This is because the inclusion workers readily share their skills and knowledge about a range of different approaches to supporting pupils' different needs. Inclusion workers at Westfields demonstrated their confidence and close partnership with teachers as they provided seamless support to pupils who struggled to settle to learning.
- Work to improve the impact of teaching has also been effective. A recently introduced reading programme confirms that many pupils make good gains in their reading ages while attending the PRU. Teachers and inclusion workers use different ways of questioning pupils to check their understanding and to develop their ability to explain what they have learned. For example, a pupil was asked to explain how to use a computer programme to an inclusion worker, who appeared to be struggling to complete the same task as the pupil.
- I was keen to find out how you and other leaders check the long-term impact of your work when pupils return to mainstream schools. This is a difficult area of work because you are reliant on other schools sharing information with you. You and your team work closely with the local 'behaviour and admissions collaborative', involving all Kirklees secondary schools. You know that it is essential that other school leaders share information with you, so you can continue to improve the service you offer.
- On your website, you outline recent developments in helping schools to identify where pupils' unmet social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) are the root of their difficulties in engaging in learning. I wanted to understand why this was a priority for you and how successfully this work is developing. Since September 2016, 20 of the 38 pupils who have been placed at Westfields have needed an assessment for an education, health and care plan because of the extent of their difficulties. You and other leaders can demonstrate how well you undertake the necessary assessments. Better information from other schools, services and the local authority would support you in identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of these pupils quickly.
- Other secondary school leaders in Kirklees recognise the value of the work that you are doing. They accept the need for pupils who are frequently excluded for short periods to have an up-to-date 'my support plan' in place. They also appreciate the training that your team provides to enable their staff to produce these plans in a person-centred way with pupils and their families.
- I noted from your website that the management committee has responsibility for three separate pupil referral units. In light of this, I wanted to find out whether members of the management committee are able to give Westfields sufficient attention and whether they understand the challenge of ensuring that key stage

3 pupils make good progress. I was reassured that this is the case when I met with members of the management committee, including the chair, and when I read the minutes of their meetings.

- Members of the management committee have a good range of knowledge and skills to support and challenge you. They interrogate information and reports to ensure that they provide secure evidence of good outcomes for the pupils. Equally, they have a firm grip on the future of Westfields in the context of Kirklees' provision for pupils who have SEMH needs. They have recently agreed, with the local authority's support, to apply to become a multi-academy trust and apply to open a free school for pupils who have SEMH needs.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers, in all subjects, plan more precisely how to develop pupils' stamina and confidence when they are writing at length
- more incisive and persistent challenge to the local authority leads to earlier identification of pupils' SEMH needs and a more effective response to the care needs of vulnerable pupils
- equally incisive and persistent challenge to secondary school leaders results in appropriate information being shared before and after pupils have placements at Westfields.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Hayter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors made short visits to the three groups being taught at Westfields and two mainstream schools where pupils are being re-integrated. Inspectors telephoned parents of pupils who have medical needs and are being educated at home. Brief conversations were held with a small number of pupils. Seventeen responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff were considered. Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the management committee, leaders from other schools representing the behaviour and admission collaborative and inclusion workers. Telephone calls were held with the local authority assistant deputy director for vulnerable children and the officer responsible for the education of children looked after by the local authority. School records and information were reviewed and discussed.