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Adrian Kneeshaw
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Dear Mr Kneeshaw

No formal designation inspection of Tracks

Following my visit to the pupil referral unit (the school) on 6 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned that the school has not been brokered by an academy trust. This is despite the school receiving an academy order in July 2016, following the judgement that it required special measures when it was last inspected in January 2016.

Evidence

I met with the school's designated safeguarding leader, scrutinised the school's checks and records in relation to the safe recruitment of staff and evaluated other documents relating to safeguarding. In addition, I held discussions with you, the head of school, the coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo), a group of Year 11 pupils, a representative of the local authority and the subject leaders for English, mathematics and science. I also met with the chair and the vice-chair of the school's management committee. I considered eight parental responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I reviewed a number of key documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, minutes of management committee meetings and the head of school's reports to governors. Together with members of the senior leadership team, I visited three lessons to observe teaching

and learning. In addition, I evaluated the progress that current pupils are making in English and mathematics. I also scrutinised information about pupils' attendance.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that:

- leaders are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Context

The school has places for 26 pupils, aged between 14 and 16, who have social, emotional and mental health needs. There are 15 pupils on roll. A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Similarly, a very small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

All but one member of the school's management committee (the school's governors) resigned after the school's last inspection. The current management committee includes two national leaders of governance. The management committee also governs the home tuition service and two other pupil referral units, Education in Hospital 1 (Airedale) and Education in Hospital 2 (Bradford Royal Infirmary).

An executive headteacher took up post in May 2017. The previous head and assistant head of school left in July and November 2017 respectively. The executive headteacher remodelled the school's workforce at the beginning of the current academic year. The substantive head of school was appointed in September 2017. She commenced her duties formally in October of the same year. Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science commenced their roles in September 2017.

Inspection findings

Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is descriptive, not evaluative. This is because the vast majority of school improvement initiatives have taken place very recently. While leaders can describe what they have done recently and what they are going to do next, they are unable to outline the impact of the actions that have been undertaken so far. Overall, the pace of improvement has been too slow.

There were no formal plans for school improvement when this inspection was announced. The school's improvement planning, including targets by which progress could be checked, was one of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection in January 2016. Leaders' plans for school improvement remain a key area for development some two years after the school's last inspection.

Members of the management committee claimed that they measure the school's progress against targets in the school's improvement plan, despite there being no plan in existence until the day of the inspection. Governors do, however, read the head of school's termly reports diligently and ask pertinent questions about their

contents. Governors are beginning to visit the school more regularly but do not provide constructive feedback as a matter of course. For example, a visit to observe changes to teaching and learning, made by a governor in February 2018, did not result in any pertinent feedback to the rest of the governors or to school leaders. Governors have not challenged school leaders rigorously about the progress being made towards the removal of special measures. They admitted that they had allowed themselves to be 'fobbed off' by previous leaders. Governors acknowledge that the rate of improvement has not been fast enough since the school's last inspection.

Leaders have recently re-introduced systems and procedures for managing the performance of staff. Members of the school's leadership team have started to carry out informal learning walks around the school. However, they have not carried out any formal observations in classrooms. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Self-evaluation is weak in this area. Leaders acknowledge there is a need to crosscheck the teaching and learning seen in lessons with the learning demonstrated in pupils' books and the information about pupils' achievement in the school's data tracking system.

Leaders have recently introduced more robust assessment procedures. The standards pupils reach and the progress pupils make are measured and reported to parents and carers every half term. Each pupil's progress is now tracked against a 'flight path' from his or her starting point at the end of key stage 2. Leaders judge that half of the pupils on the school's roll are making the progress expected of them, or better, in mathematics from their starting points. Leaders acknowledge that pupils' progress in English is much slower than it is in mathematics. Pupils are making poor progress from their starting points in this area of the curriculum.

The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science can describe the actions they have taken to improve the provision in their subjects. For example, they have identified the most able pupils and are delivering extra lessons to help these pupils to reach their full potential by the end of Year 11. However, there are no formal plans that outline the actions that have been, or are yet to be taken. There are no measures by which the success of subject leaders' actions can be judged.

Complicated systems and procedures slow pupils' admission into this specialist provision. The vast majority of pupils currently on roll joined the school at the beginning of Year 11. Once on roll, pupils make rapid progress, both socially and emotionally. However, they do not have enough time in the school to catch up with the academic work that they have missed previously.

Over half of the parents of pupils on the school's roll completed Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Parent View. These parents are positive about the school's provision. The pupils are effusive in their praise for the school. They told me that the staff go 'above and beyond' to meet their individual needs. They reported that the school's

'homeliness, smallness and friendliness' lessens their anxieties. Pupils appreciate the quality of the careers advice and support on offer. One mentioned support to complete a curriculum vitae, while another appreciated an accompanied visit to a university. All pupils have clear aims for the future.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that staff are regularly trained in accordance with the most recent legislation. The school's attendance policy was reviewed in October 2017. Pupils, parents and staff now know exactly what is required of them. As a result, the attendance of the vast majority of pupils on roll is improving over time. Governors have not asked for the number of behaviour and bullying incidents to be reported to them on a regular basis. This limits their ability to challenge or praise any emerging trends.

External support

The executive headteacher has made the expertise of staff in his mainstream secondary school freely available to the staff at Tracks. As a result, subject leaders have benefited from visiting an outstanding school to observe practice, share resources and check that pupils' work is assessed accurately. In addition, senior leaders have established robust systems to track pupils' achievement and record bullying and behaviour incidents appropriately.

Following the last inspection, the local authority supported the development of governance through the formation of a new management group. The local authority's strategic lead for behaviour and special educational needs (SEN) attends termly meetings of the management committee. An independent review, commissioned by the local authority, took place in May 2017. However, the recommendations made at that time have not been acted on thoroughly. The new head of school, at the time of this inspection, had not been invited to join the local authority's induction programme for new headteachers. There have not been any meetings of the local authority's school-specific monitoring group (SSMG) recently. The local authority's challenge and support for this school has not been sufficiently helpful. At the end of this inspection, the local authority committed to:

- chairing a meeting of the SSMG every month
- checking the progress the school has made towards the removal of special measures between every meeting of the SSMG
- including the head of school in the local authority's induction programme for new headteachers immediately.

Priorities for further improvement

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's plans for improvement are sharply focused on key weaknesses,

include clear and measurable step-by-step targets and are regularly reviewed and updated

- the number and type of bullying and behaviour incidents are reported to governors regularly
- governors, including the two national leaders of governance, challenge leaders more thoroughly about the impact of the actions taken
- senior leaders observe teaching and learning in classrooms, check the learning and progress made by pupils in their workbooks and ensure that information in the school's data tracking system is accurate
- the school's admissions procedures are clarified and agreed with the local authority as a matter of urgency.

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

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector