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Jonathan Schofield
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Schofield

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bradford District PRU

Following my visit with Diane Reynard and Tudor Griffiths, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 5–06 December 2018, 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 school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2017.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school 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 Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017.

- As a matter of urgency, improve the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements by making sure that:
 - pupils' behaviour, including the use of physical restraint, is managed safely and effectively at the vocational centre and at all alternative placements
 - the safeguarding policies at all alternative placements are up to date and all staff are knowledgeable about how to promote pupils' safety and welfare.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by making sure that:
 - leaders and the management committee have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the school's performance
 - improvement plans are sharply focused on the school's key weaknesses and are regularly and robustly reviewed and updated
 - performance management is used to drive improvement in teaching, accelerate pupils' progress and hold teachers and leaders rigorously to account
 - leaders and the management committee closely monitor the impact of additional funding on the attendance and achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at alternative placements.
- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the progress pupils make, especially pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at alternative placements by making sure that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan learning activities which are interesting, motivating and closely matched to pupils' interests and levels of ability
 - teachers have strong subject knowledge and understand how to adapt learning activities and resources to meet pupils' special educational needs
 - teachers assess pupils' learning and progress accurately, identify errors and misconceptions in their work and tackle them effectively.
- As a matter of urgency, improve the level of attendance and reduce persistent absence.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of this school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 05 December 2018 to 06 December 2018

Evidence

Inspectors visited three sites on which pupils are educated full-time as part of the provision at Bradford District PRU: Anerley Street Vocational Centre; Keighley College and the Training and Skills Centre. Inspectors also visited alternative placements that the school uses to extend the curriculum on offer, including James UK, Pivot under construction and Prism. At each site, inspectors observed learning, looked at evidence of pupils' work and spoke to both pupils and members of staff.

Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, colleagues responsible for safeguarding and members of the wider strategic team. A meeting was held with the chair of the management committee. An inspector spoke with two colleagues from the local authority, including the chair of the scrutiny panel. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work from different year groups, different sites and from a variety of subjects, including English and mathematics. School leaders presented the school development plan and information detailing pupils' progress and attainment. A variety of other documents was considered, including those relating to safeguarding and other policies on the school's website. No parent or carer responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Context

Since the school was judged to require special measures, there have been significant changes to the membership of the management committee and there is a new chairperson in place. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher and a 'wider strategic team'. In addition, there have been changes to staffing structures and job descriptions at school, including the development of a pastoral hub which incorporates the safeguarding, behaviour and therapy teams.

In November 2018, an academy order was put in place. The preferred sponsor for the school has been named as the Exceed Academy Trust.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The new chair of the management committee and the acting headteacher have had a very positive impact on the improvement that this school is making. The chair of the management committee is experienced and focused. The acting headteacher is determined and highly effective. Planning, for the beginning of the school year in September 2018, was comprehensive and the school is now improving at a rapid pace. The positive impact on the management committee, the acting headteacher and the wider strategic team can be seen in the improved quality of teaching and learning, the amended curriculum and on the better behaviour of pupils. As a result, inspectors judge that school leaders are now taking effective action towards the

removal of special measures.

The improvement in the quality of systems and procedures, underpinning the operation of the school, is striking. Teachers and other staff told inspectors how much communication has improved, including between the sites on which the school operates. In addition, several spoke positively of the extent to which they now know what their role is and what is expected of them. Inspectors saw new systems linked to staff appraisal and how the quality of teaching is monitored, first hand. These are beginning to have a positive impact. However, school leaders are aware that some promoted positions in school are not permanent and some job descriptions are not in place at this time.

Due to the high quality of these new systems and procedures, school leaders now have an incisive understanding of the areas of strength at school and what needs to improve further. This understanding also includes members of the management committee. Leaders' self-evaluation documents are sensible. Associated improvement plans are focused on the correct areas of school life. After the last inspection, school leaders ensured that reviews of the use of pupil premium and the effectiveness of governance were completed. Current plans for improvement, rewritten after June 2018, build on these. Leaders, together with the management committee, now monitor more closely the use of any additional funding that the school receives.

An example of current developments is the way in which the curriculum has been changed and improved. The acting headteacher wanted to ensure that the courses on offer for pupils were more aligned to their individual interests and needs. There is now a wider selection of courses available for pupils, underpinned by the development of basic skills. The focus on pupils' 'personalised development, re-engagement and informed choices', as a basis for the curriculum, is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation. The acting headteacher has also made the bold decision to match the specific sites, on which pupils study, with their individual pastoral and academic needs. For example, a larger number of pupils now study at More4U based at Keighley College, which has a history of effective provision.

The focus on systems and structures has also had a positive impact on safeguarding. Staff training is comprehensive and up to date. Processes around attendance are now secure. Members of staff are knowledgeable about how to promote pupils' welfare and safety. Any use of physical restraint is well managed. Indeed, the safeguarding team are proactive in their approach to ensure that more vulnerable pupils are kept safe. Members of staff work more closely with parents to ensure that pupils remain focused at school. As a result of these improvements, inspectors judge safeguarding to be effective.

The acting headteacher leads by example and is bringing a sense of community to the school. He has a strong visible presence across the sites and knows the pupils in his care well. He gets involved at school. He even had his beard trimmed in a hair

and beauty lesson! Staff morale is high, and pupils feel increasingly confident about their education. Although there is a way to go before the impact of school leaders is fully realised, inspectors confirm that the school is moving in the right direction now. At the time of the inspection, the announcement of the preferred sponsor for the school was too recent for leaders to have started relevant preparation for change.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Relationships between pupils and members of staff are increasingly positive across the sites on which the school operates. As a result, pupils' levels of focus in lessons is increasing. Where learning is stronger, there is a good match between pupils' interests and abilities and the material being studied. Some particularly strong learning was observed during the inspection. High expectations of pupils' subject knowledge were seen in a hair and beauty lesson. In this lesson, pupils were talking about specific hairdressing techniques such as effleurage and petrissage. Themes and topics covered in English GCSE in the Skills Centre ensured that pupils were stretched. Inspectors saw GCSE artwork of a high standard. They also saw pupils fully engaged in motor vehicle lessons, working together, solving problems and listening intently to what teachers were saying. The curriculum has been altered so that teachers are more likely to be teaching their specialist subjects.

Teaching is now more closely aligned to the needs of pupils. At More4U, for example, lists of 'do's and don'ts' are available for members of staff. This is so they know what will help individual pupils to stay on task and, conversely, what may trigger a negative reaction. In this way, pastorally, teachers' planning is increasingly more aligned to pupils' needs. Similar profiles are in place to ensure that staff know the specific requirements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In spite of improvements, school leaders know that the quality of teaching across the school remains too variable. The low rate of attendance of some pupils has a negative impact on their learning. Too much work is missed and the systems to help pupils plug any gaps are not strong enough. This is particularly the case for pupils at Anerley Street Vocational Centre. Occasionally, some pupils refuse to get involved in learning and, despite the efforts of staff, this also has a negative impact on their learning. School leaders are aware that more work needs to be done to ensure that pupils' oracy and their standards of written English improve. Evidence, from pupils' exercise books, shows a wide variation in how engaged pupils are in English, for example. Not all pupils are fully prepared to learn at school. Too few show enough resilience to help them to make good progress.

Nonetheless, systems to check the quality of teaching across the sites are now stronger. Members of staff say that their professional development has a high priority for senior leaders. The wider choice of subjects that pupils now have, together with improved systems to ensure that learning is well planned and that

pupils focus more in lessons, are ensuring that pupils are gaining more from their education.

In discussions, pupils indicated that they are now increasingly aware that this is a 'real school,' these are 'real qualifications' and they know that they need to 'settle down and work'. This is leading to a stronger commitment to school and better focus in lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

There are now systems and processes in place to assure the welfare of pupils. Attendance procedures are fit for purpose. Teachers use the correct codes for categorising different reasons for absence. School leaders now know, to what extent, rates of absence are having an impact on pupils' learning. The attendance officer leaves no stone unturned when it comes to identifying reasons for missing school and removing barriers to absence. Home visits, meetings with parents and rewards systems are all used to promote good attendance. These are beginning to have a positive impact on the attendance of some pupils. The use of fixed-term exclusion has increased. This is because school leaders have higher expectations of standards of behaviour. Systems are more watertight now. The acting headteacher knows that the use of fixed-term exclusion is too high.

The acting headteacher has been proactive in developing a strategy around admissions. He works with leaders from other secondary schools, in the local authority, to ensure that pupils admitted to Bradford District PRU are being placed in the right school. Open and honest discussions about the correct placement for individual pupils take place. Colleagues from different settings work together to match the placement to the needs of individuals. This, together with a strong transition and induction programme for new pupils, is leading to an improvement in the standards of behaviour at school. Physical changes to the building at the Anerley Street Vocational Centre have also led to a calmer environment.

There is now a variety of strategies being used to 'nudge' pupils in the right direction in as far as their behaviour is concerned. Rewards systems are different across the school's sites and tailored to meet individuals' needs. For example, at More4U, postcards are sent home, should pupils meet attendance targets, show positive attitudes and be punctual. At Anerley Street Vocational Centre, pupils' 'behaviour, engagement, learning, listening, and speaking' (BELLS) are tracked. Should any pupils struggle to behave when in alternative provision, there is now a system where staff from the PRU go directly to the provision to offer support. The electronic system, used to flag up misbehaviour, allows leaders to identify hot spots and intervene.

Teachers actively promote pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils have access to speech and language therapy, counselling and art therapy, should they need these services, for example. On some sites, there is a tutor period each day to

help pupils to focus on learning for the day. Social workers and police support officers are available for pupils also, should they need their support. Recent enrichment activities have focused on fire safety, knife crime and enterprise.

All of these systems and provisions, together with the care of members of staff, are leading to an improvement in the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils. Leaders are well aware that there is still a way to go. Standards of behaviour are not consistently positive. Many pupils are not currently successful learners. Nonetheless, inspectors confirm that improvements are under way.

Outcomes for pupils

There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils have either college placements or employment when they leave Year 11. Leaders continue to monitor how well pupils are doing after they have left school. This ensures that they are as successful as possible in their new ventures. This focus on transition is having a positive impact. The vast majority of leavers, in 2018, are either at college, in further education or in employment. School leaders work with other agencies to support pupils to this end.

Pupils, who left the school in 2018 had also had the opportunity to study a greater number of qualifications than pupils who studied at the PRU in the past. As a result, pupils that left school in 2018, reached higher standards than those that left in 2017. The new structure of the curriculum is giving current pupils the opportunity to study an increased number, and wider variety, of subjects. The acting headteacher's focus on pupils' personal development is seen through the increased enrichment opportunities on offer. These are also having a positive impact on pupils' prospects when they leave school.

Systems, to check the progress that pupils are making and the standards that they are reaching, are, however, in their infancy. They allow teachers to spot trends in pupils' performance and create intervention programmes where needed. However, inspectors noted that these systems are often focused on pupils' rates of completion of portfolio-based qualifications. School leaders agreed that one of the next steps for the school is to ensure that teachers are able to track pupils' progress from their individual starting points. With the current system, leaders are not able to consistently identify whether pupils are being stretched enough in lessons.

Inspectors noted the high level of variation in the standards that pupils are reaching in English. They also noted that, although improved, the match of course to the ability of the individual pupil is not stretching enough, specifically at the Skills Centre. However, they also noted that some vocational programmes are of a high quality and are leading to strong outcomes for pupils. Motor vehicle studies is a good example of this.

Overall, the more precise use of alternative provision to spark the interest of pupils, the focus on developing pupils' personal skills, and the focus on what pupils will do

after Year 11, are all having a positive impact on the outcomes that pupils are reaching and the progress that they are making.

External support

After the school was judged to require special measures, the local authority brokered support for the school from national leaders of education and specialist leaders of education. Contracts were given to support school leaders and to improve pupil behaviour. More recently, and specifically since June 2018, there have been changes to the support given to the school. An officer from the local authority now chairs a scrutiny panel that checks the progress that school leaders are making in improving the quality of education. All of the leadership support given to the school now comes from an external consultant. The focus of this work is on leadership coaching and the development of quality assurance systems. The current package of support in place is having a positive impact on school leadership and the rate of improvement that is being made.