

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 September 2023

Nigel Biddle
Interim headteacher
Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU)
Lawnswood Avenue
Parkfields
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV4 6SR

Dear Mr Biddle

Special measures monitoring inspection of Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU)

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 12 July 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in January 2023.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the interim chair of the management committee and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, spoke with pupils and staff and scrutinised a range of documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Midpoint Centre (Key Stage 4 PRU) remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

There have been several changes to the school's leadership since the previous inspection. You have stepped up to act as interim headteacher since April 2023 in the absence of the executive headteacher and headteacher. Further capacity has been

added to the leadership team with the appointment of an interim assistant headteacher with responsibility for behaviour and attitudes. The local authority has also seconded a senior leader from a nearby academy trust to work with the school for four days a week. Several staff will be leaving the school at the end of this academic year. Despite this, you have ensured that the school will be fully staffed from September 2023.

On this inspection, I focused my activities on the work of school leaders to improve safeguarding, as well as pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

Your work to improve safeguarding is proving successful. Leaders have ensured that all staff who have been appointed have undergone appropriate checks so that they are suitable to work with children. At the last inspection, staff did not have a common and shared understanding of when to record a concern. Crucially, this has now changed. You have provided training to staff so that there are clear expectations about when, how and where to record concerns on the school's online system. You have also put in place an appropriate system for supply staff. The school's safeguarding records are kept up to date and show that leaders are acting swiftly to ensure that pupils get the help they need in a timely manner. Alongside this, there are daily briefings where staff share key information and provide relevant feedback on pupils. Although there have been improvements to safeguarding, there is more work still to do. The process for inducting new pupils to the school is not robust enough. Leaders are not gathering information quickly about vulnerable pupils so that they are fully aware of their needs before they start at the school. In addition, leaders are not ensuring that staff have a secure understanding of the safeguarding risks in the local area.

You and your leadership team have made positive steps forward to improve the behaviour and culture of the school. Teaching assistants are providing greater support to help get pupils back into lessons to focus on their learning. You have also successfully introduced an online system to record both positive and negative behaviours. Staff have been trained on how to use this system effectively. Leaders routinely analyse the data from this system to pinpoint potential hotspots and identify pupils who require additional support with their behaviour. Your data shows that since the last inspection, there has been a significant reduction in the number of serious incidents that put staff and pupils at risk of harm.

During this inspection, pupils were generally calm and followed staff instructions. However, pupils said they felt this was mainly because Year 11 pupils had now left. However, they do recognise that things are slowly getting better. Pupils now understand that there will be a consequence for poor behaviour. This was echoed in discussions with members of staff. You are clear that there is further work to do for the school's induction process to provide a comprehensive picture of a pupil's behavioural needs before they come to the school. You also recognise that your behaviour policy needs to be reviewed so that it accurately reflects the new systems that leaders have implemented over the last term.

Work has started to help improve pupils' attendance. A new full-time attendance officer has recently been appointed who is supporting your work in this area. Leaders have

put in place a clear system for following up first day absence and carrying out home visits where necessary. Leaders recognise that during this academic year, attendance has been highly variable. At one point, overall attendance had fallen to 50%. Leaders are continuing to track and monitor individual pupils' attendance carefully and have begun to implement a range of new initiatives. This has included a focus on rewarding positive attendance for those who attend for 100% each week. This has proven successful with more pupils attending school regularly. However, further work is required for attendance to continue to improve. Leaders recognise that the school's attendance policy needs updating so that it accurately reflects leaders' new approach to monitoring and tracking attendance.

Leaders' work to improve the school continues to be overseen by a management committee. The previous chair of the management committee left in May 2023 and an existing member of the management committee is fulfilling the role as acting chair. Despite the progress that has been made by current school leaders, the structure of this committee is not fit for purpose. Members of the committee are well intentioned but do not have a sharp enough focus on this school nor are they providing sufficient scrutiny of leaders' work. The committee does not have clear, strategic oversight of how leaders are implementing actions to help the school improve.

Representatives from the local authority have visited the school on several occasions since the previous inspection to check on the progress leaders are making. Leaders have also received extensive support from a multi-academy trust that has been commissioned by the Department for Education. You and the leadership team have valued this support, including at management committee level, in helping to steer the school through a tricky time. You have welcomed the support trust leaders have provided in setting out clear roles and responsibilities for staff at every level. They have also supported your work in helping to improve safeguarding, behaviour and attitudes.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes
His Majesty's Inspector