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Ms D Horlock
Head of Centre
The New Broadwalk Pupil Referral Unit
The Broadwalk Centre
Belvedere Road
Salford
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Dear Ms Horlock

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF THE NEW BROADWALK PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Introduction

Following my visit with Caroline Broomhead HMI to your centre on 23 and 24 November 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of receiving this letter

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited 11 lessons, scrutinised documents and met with you and members of staff, a group of pupils, the chair of the management committee and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the inspection in May 2005, the unit has appointed a deputy head, an internal candidate, who will take up post in January 2006. The New Broadwalk now caters solely for permanently excluded Key Stage 3 pupils, of whom at the time of this monitoring visit there were 21 on roll, and fluctuating numbers of Key Stage 3 pupils on fixed term exclusions from all Salford schools and Key Stage 4 pupils, on first day

cover for exclusion, from those schools involved in the Behaviour Improvement Programme.

Achievement and standards

The inspection focussed on the work of the pupils who have been permanently excluded and are therefore at the centre for more than a week. Nearly half of the current 21 pupils on roll have been at the centre for at least a year.

The pupils' attainment on entry is generally below that expected for their age. In particular, tests show that over half of the pupils have reading ages which are more than five years below their chronological age, but the centre has not yet developed an agreed approach to sharing this information and ensuring that staff take this into account in their planning and teaching. Standards achieved by pupils demonstrate the wide range of ability in the different groups. A small number of pupils are working at levels in line with national expectations, but for the majority standards are well below this; attainment is in the range of National Curriculum Levels 2 to 5. This reflects the difficulties pupils experience in their learning and the gaps in their previous education.

Staff are beginning to involve pupils in understanding what they have to do to achieve higher standards, but targets to improve learning are at an early stage of development in the school. Five of the current pupils in Year 9 are being referred for assessment for statements of special educational need.

In 10 of the 11 lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory or better progress in learning, and in 3 lessons it was good. Those who attend regularly are making satisfactory progress in their learning. In science, careful tracking shows that some pupils are achieving well in their units of work. In information and communication technology (ICT) the pupils are working on completing units of accreditation, for example in word processing, and the staff expect that they will be successful in receiving certificates for their achievements this year.

Some Year 9 pupils are expecting to return to mainstream schools in the near future. Approximately twelve Year 9 pupils are expected to sit their end of Key Stage 3 assessments tests in May 2006. Teachers know pupils' predicted grades for English, mathematics and science which are in line with their current levels of ability and, in some cases, indicated a suitable level of challenge and high expectations. However, the centre does not keep records of the progress and achievements of pupils who have left or moved on at the end of Key Stage 3, making it difficult to show how well pupils have progressed during their time there. The results for the end of Year 9 national tests taken in May 2005 could not be provided to inspectors despite several requests for this information.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' attendance is improving albeit from a very low baseline, but it is still unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, the unit had difficulty providing

timely data on attendance. The figure given for overall attendance then was 51%. The unit has now established an electronic system for collecting attendance figures, at pupil and at unit level. This data shows that since September, the overall weekly attendance figure has ranged from approximately 60% to 80%, an improvement on the previous figure. However, data for individual pupils shows wide variations, and for some it is still unsatisfactory. The unit has introduced measures to reward pupils for good attendance and these are popular with the youngsters. The points system has been re-invigorated and re-launched; this time with input from the newly formed pupil council, so that pupils can gain small prizes if they meet their attendance targets. The unit works closely with the Education Welfare Service to ensure consistency of support and challenge to pupils and families. Nevertheless, for some pupils the journey to the centre is long and difficult as they have to cross the city on public transport to be on time for the 8.30 am start. For some of them, this means an extremely early start to the day. Punctuality overall remains unsatisfactory. Many pupils arrive late at the beginning of the day and this hinders the learning of others because lessons are delayed for their possible arrival. The rewards system goes some way to tackling this but much more needs to be done.

Pupils' behaviour is much improved, to the extent that in most of the lessons observed there was a generally calm and purposeful atmosphere. Staff were consistent in their approach to managing any inappropriate behaviour, and when individual pupils did become disruptive, successfully dealt with this, minimising the impact of the behaviour on others. Pupils and staff report that the provision of a new corridor to the downstairs classrooms has significantly reduced the potential for disruption. However, upstairs, access to the middle classroom is still possible only from another and so lessons in this room are still disrupted by people walking through.

Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved and are generally positive. Much of this is due to the recent changes in the curriculum on offer and the improving quality of the lessons. Pupils are responding well to the thematic approach to their studies. For example, this term the unit has been studying 'The Titanic'. The greater variety of activities has increased pupils' interest and deepened, in some, their levels of motivation. In addition, the newly introduced 'I can do' programme based outside the unit has allowed pupils to experience a range of activities for the first time. An integral part of this programme is the requirement on pupils to 'join up', agreeing to be a team member, consider others and take on some responsibility. Pupils report that they enjoy these activities and value them. Staff report positive consequences of this provision in some pupils; for example, more instances of kindness to one another. This type of very useful information is not consistently recorded, although the unit does have figures showing a reduction in criminal damage and assaults on staff since the new programmes were launched.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2005:

- **improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils so that they have the opportunity to achieve well: inadequate progress**

- **improve pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development: satisfactory progress**

Quality of provision

The curriculum offers pupils a broad range of subjects and there is a satisfactory balance of time allocated to each. Recent changes have enhanced the curriculum, generated more enthusiasm and brought learning to life. For example, the pupils are looking forward to their visit to Liverpool docks next week to see a model of the Titanic, which they have been learning about. Half-termly themes are jointly planned by the staff and these are leading to better continuity and linking of learning across different subjects. There is a strong focus on 'learning by doing' which appeals to the pupils and teachers are now more aware of the need to develop basic skills through tasks which are relevant and meaningful to pupils' lives, for example in mathematics pupils extend their numeracy skills whilst learning about fireworks and safety. Through the 'I can do' programme the pupils enjoy off-site activities which successfully encourage them to work in teams, take responsibility for their own behaviour and develop a greater understanding of the wider community. Specialist subject expertise is now used more effectively and this is boosting staff confidence as well as raising expectations for pupils' learning. Opportunities to work with musicians and artists in workshops have also added to the variety in the curriculum and made a significant contribution to developing the pupils' self esteem. Improvements have been made to resources and equipment, for example in increasing the number of interactive whiteboards.

The quality of teaching has improved. In 4 out of 11 lessons it was good or better. In the best lessons, learning is active, interesting and fun. Relationships are good and humour is used wisely to overcome some pupils' initial reluctance to get involved. For example in a 'rapping' workshop, one pupil rehearsed a piece several times until he had refined his performance, and was gently coached in a way that gave him the confidence to take risks and accept that we can all learn from our mistakes. In nearly all lessons pupils have a positive attitude and want to learn. Their behaviour is generally satisfactory and much of this is achieved through staff planning practical activities and responding in a calm manner when pupils begin to lose concentration and disrupt the work of others. The less successful lessons were characterised by lack of planning for individual needs which meant that pupils relied too heavily on adult support and were prevented from getting on with tasks independently. Although lessons now have a better structure, opportunities were missed to relate starter activities to the main parts of lessons and so deepen pupils' understanding. Lessons at the beginning of the day were delayed by poor punctuality and this resulted in planned work not being completed, leading to some frustration for both staff and pupils. Teaching assistants usually provide good support for learning. They are not afraid to undertake the same tasks which are set for pupils and in doing so, they skilfully show that anyone can find a task difficult to complete; this clever strategy is effective in encouraging pupils' to try new things.

There have been improvements in assessment. Initial assessment is now carried out in English, mathematics and science to establish a baseline from which to measure progress. Teachers are beginning to be able to show progress, for example at the end of units of work, although this is not yet happening across all subjects and the centre does not routinely collect information about progress over time making it difficult to set suitable learning goals for the future. Although the centre has data about pupils' literacy skills, this is not being shared with staff and is not therefore sufficiently taken into account when lessons are being planned. There is no agreed approach to how reading difficulties will be addressed; Some staff make reference to key words in their lesson objectives but do not then go on to ensure that pupils become confident in speaking and writing them.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2005:

- **improve teaching so that the work set for pupils is more effectively matched to their individual needs and abilities: satisfactory progress.**
- **improve the assessment of pupils' work and progress so that pupils are better informed of what they need to do to improve their achievement: satisfactory progress**

Leadership and management

The action plan for improvement was drawn up by representatives from the LA School Improvement Service, the Management Committee, Education Welfare Service, the Education Inclusion Service and the Head of the Centre; each taking responsibility for a different key issue. This has led to changes in the wording of some of the key issues. This is of most concern in the key issue originally written in May 2005 as: "Improve pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development". This has been narrowed down, in the action plan, to "establish better systems to manage and improve the behaviour of pupils". This is too narrowly focused on managing behaviour to the detriment of looking at the attitudes and personal development of pupils and this needs to be reviewed. Otherwise, the action plan is a clear and focused document and is well drafted.

The management committee is now better informed about the work of the unit and has made changes to its reporting systems to ensure that timely and relevant information about the unit reaches it. There is a genuine desire to support and challenge the unit and to hold it to account for the work it carries out.

There has been substantial external support provided which is leading to the emergence of some good practice particularly at subject leader level but this has not yet been harnessed as part of a whole school drive to improve provision. There is no evaluation of the impact of changes taking place and as a result, there is an

absence of clear direction to unify and channel the recent emerging good practice. An example of this is the difficulty inspectors have in gaining straight forward data. Systems for managing the collection of basic data are weak and undermine staff's attempts to build a complete picture of their pupils, or indeed, the work that the unit is doing as a whole. The good work which is going on is taking place in pockets of isolation; as a result, the unit is not yet building effective capacity to evaluate its own performance.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2005:

- **address weaknesses in leadership, management and governance: satisfactory progress**

External support

The LA has provided satisfactory support, with several agencies involved in drawing up the action plan. Each agency has provided practical help and training for staff and this has had a positive impact. The quality of teaching has improved; assessment procedures are being introduced, training for staff on managing behaviour has improved consistency of approach and the LA has made physical alterations to the building to reduce the potential of disruption to lessons. There is a possibility that the very reasonable initial strategic lead from the various agencies may now have to be reconsidered to allow the unit staff themselves, and the Head of Centre especially, to take on more of the responsibility for improvement, with a greater sense of urgency.

The LA's statement of action is clear and unambiguous. It details the levels of support the unit will receive, and when it expects the unit to be removed from special measures.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures: satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- **The head of centre to provide clear direction for subject leaders which recognises how emerging good practice can form the basis for whole school improvement.**
- **Establish consistent approaches to assessment and use the data to inform teachers' planning to meet individual needs.**
- **Involve pupils in tracking their own progress and understanding of how to improve further.**
- **Improve attendance and punctuality.**

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of the management committee and the Director of Children's Services for Salford.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Westington
H M Inspector