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15 December 2006

Mrs C Saye  
Head of EOTAS  
Young People's Centre  
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Park House  
Park Avenue  
Grimsby  
DN32 0BZ

Dear Mrs Saye,

#### OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected the Young People's Centre (YPC) on 21 November 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the staff and local authority representatives with whom I met and also to the pupils who gave of their time to meet with me.

This visit was undertaken under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 in order to monitor the progress made by the pupil referral unit.

As a result of the inspection in March 2006 one of the local authority's pupil referral units, The Tuition Centre, was placed in special measures and was required to address concerns about leadership and management, the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and the monitoring of pupils' progress and their attendance. In response the local authority hastened its plans for the reorganisation of this aspect of its provision and the Tuition Centre subsequently closed in August 2006. The Young People's Centre opened in its place. A new staffing structure and a reconsideration of the type of pupil needs it was asked to accommodate gave the YPC a helpful fresh start. The head of the Education Other than at School Service (EOTAS) managed the centre until the head of centre officially took up her post in October 2006. The YPC provides exclusively for pregnant schoolgirls, teenage mothers and other pupils with medical and psychological needs. Pupils with challenging behaviour were moved to another pupil referral unit and college placements on the closure of The Tuition Centre. The YPC has continued to address the needs of its predecessor unit, as identified in the Ofsted report, and has worked closely with the local authority in delivering its statement of action. In January 2007 the YPC is to move into purposely refurbished accommodation on the site of a local secondary school.

Having considered carefully all the evidence presented by the centre and the local authority, I am of the opinion that at this time the centre is making satisfactory progress.

The leadership and management of the centre have been improved and are effective. Through its fresh-start arrangements, the local authority has provided clarity of purpose and its statement of action has been a helpful road map in forging improvements at the centre. This is to be superseded by the centre's own school improvement plan, which is in an early stage of development. Although there is still much to do, the head of EOTAS and the head of centre have driven forward the necessary changes with vigour. Staff have responded well and are buoyed by the transformation in the provision. The management committee has suitably wide representation and a sub-group has met frequently to receive reports, visit the centre and hold officers and the centre's leaders to account. Although lesson observations have been undertaken by the link adviser and a headteacher representative of the management committee, the monitoring of lessons by the head of centre is not formalised and a schedule of monitoring and evaluation is a necessary next step. The centre is hampered by the scarcity of information it receives from some mainstream schools when admitting pupils. The local authority should work with mainstream schools to ensure that pupils attending the centre are not disadvantaged in this way. Parents have a positive view of the centre and one wrote, "I am happy with how [my son] has settled at the school, he has become much happier and confident. He always enjoys going to school and I have seen a big change in him."

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. This has been helped by a common planning format and the development of medium and short-term curriculum plans for all subjects. However, the main reasons why teaching is not better than this are because it lacks pace and vibrancy and relies too heavily on textbook work; there is insufficient active learning. In part this is due to the inadequacy of resources, such as a lack of interactive whiteboards and science and technology facilities. This has been recognised by the local authority and the new accommodation is to include these resources. Despite these drawbacks the pupils work diligently, although often unenthused, and are generally well behaved. In the lessons observed pupils' progress was satisfactory. The management of behaviour is a diminishing concern, given that pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour are no longer taught at the centre. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils themselves are good. Marking is regular and celebratory although it often lacks guidance to pupils on how to improve further. Overall objectives are valuably used to give purpose and clarity to lessons but more could be done to incorporate objectives or targets for individual pupils into planning so that work can be more closely matched to their needs. Useful files are held on each pupil and those with statements of special educational needs have individual learning plans. The development of individual learning plans for other pupils is a necessary next step. The progress made by the pupils is monitored effectively through half-termly progress records and termly reviews.

The curriculum has been suitably broadened to make it relevant and appealing. Most National Curriculum subjects are covered, along with child development, media

studies and 'healthy options' (leisure pursuits). The centre has a commitment towards the health and well-being of its pupils and has registered its intent to seek the Healthy Schools Standard. Healthy living is taught through science and personal, social and health education and the healthy options programme. Smoking has been banned on the site and due attention has been given to the suitability and availability of drinks during the day. Pupils are aware of their nutritional requirements and some report that they do not think the packed lunches provided entirely satisfy these. GCSE and entry level examination courses are taken in most subjects. The centre has provided work experience for some pupils this year and is working closely with the Connexions service to ensure all pupils have these opportunities in the coming two terms. Links with two local colleges are developing well and the centre expects to facilitate college placements for all pupils who wish to move into further education at the end of their time at the centre.

All pupils at the centre are provided with full-time education, although there are a small number of pupils whose medical or psychological needs necessitate them receiving part-time home tuition. An educational assistant has been given responsibility to operate the centre's first-day absence system of telephone calls to parents and carers. The centre is working well with its attached education welfare officer and together they have reduced unauthorised absence for pregnant school girls and young mothers from 16.8% for the summer term to 4.9% for the autumn term to date, and from 7% to 1.1% for pupils with medical and psychological needs. However, given the nature of the pupil population, authorised absence remains high; illness, medical appointments and babies' ailments are frequent occurrences for some pupils.

The vast majority say they do not wish to return to their mainstream schools. They generally enjoy attending the centre as they find it a haven in their times of need. However a small number feel they are not being sufficiently challenged in some subjects, a view endorsed by HMI.

In conclusion, from a very low base, the centre has made substantial improvements in the short time it has been open. It has been revitalised and the impending move to more suitable accommodation holds much promise. The local authority and senior staff recognise the centre's remaining weaknesses and have the capacity to address these successfully.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in the centre.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven

Her Majesty's Inspector