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Mr Wayne Marshall
The Headteacher
The Milton Keynes Primary Pupil Referral Unit
Romans Field site
Shenley Road
Bletchley, MK3 7AW

Dear Mr Marshall

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 2 July 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass my thanks to the staff, the members of the management committee and the local authority representatives who also met with me.

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

As a result of the inspection on 28 June 2007, the school was asked to:

- clarify the policy on admissions and ensure that all pupils receive full-time education
- improve the way information on pupils' learning is used in lesson planning
- provide intensive support for those with learning difficulties
- improve self-evaluation and ensure all aspects of the unit's work are regularly monitored.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The re-location of the unit to the site of the Romans Field School has been very successful. The unit is now fully in the charge of the headteacher of this school. Although the move was later than that originally planned, the unit was able to function fully from the beginning of the current academic year in pleasant, but temporary, accommodation. There are well-advanced plans for a permanent building to house the unit on its present site, reflecting the commitment of the local authority (LA) to the place of the unit in its emerging strategy for behaviour support in its primary schools. Clarification of the unit's future role is imminent. The headteacher and local authority representatives are working closely together to find a model of provision that best suits the needs of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties within the local area.

Since the last inspection, the unit has made good progress in managing the re-integration of pupils into mainstream schools. It has significantly reduced the number of pupils without full-time education and has well-considered plans to place those few remaining, early in the new academic year. The LA has provided generous support packages for pupils returning to mainstream schools and the unit has used its staffing very flexibly to ensure successful transitions for most.

The unit has very detailed records of the pupils' progress from their points of entry. A major step forward since the last inspection is the close liaison with the pupils' home schools on initial assessments so that little time is wasted in helping pupils to move forward. Generally, on joining the unit, pupils' performance is below average. Most make good progress over the maximum of two terms within the unit, particularly in reading, spelling and in their personal development. The supportive links with external agencies established in mainstream schools are maintained and these in turn assist staff in the unit well to both diagnose and provide effectively for those pupils with specific learning difficulties. Within the weekly planning cycle, particular slots are identified and used to focus sharply on targets within pupils' individual learning plans. These targets are very detailed and allow teachers and support assistants to match work closely to the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers' planning has also improved notably since the last inspection. Pupils are now grouped by need within a single class, making for greater collaboration between staff in providing work that builds carefully on earlier learning.

Systems to support the unit in evaluating its work have developed well since the inspection. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored and the unit has an improvement plan that mirrors that of the Romans Field School. New assessment procedures are securely in place to check pupils' progress. Academic as well as personal targets are set and reviewed within pupils' individual education plans. Senior managers from the unit now attend a temporary support panel so that they have an overview of the planned pathways for those pupils likely to be placed in the unit.

The LA, the Romans Field School and the present management committee have provided good support for the unit since the last inspection. The inclusion of headteachers from local schools in the management committee has improved significantly the unit's opportunities to ensure full-time education for all pupils through managed moves into mainstream or other special schools.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary for State, to the Chair of the Managing Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Milton Keynes.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Nolan
Additional Inspector