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Martin Coxell
The Headteacher
Integrated Support Centre PRU
The Heybridge Centre
Colchester Road
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Dear Mr Coxell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your Service on 17 September 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am also grateful to your colleague managers and staff from the other sites, to the local authority (LA) officer and pupils at Heybridge who made time to share their views with me.

As a result of the last inspection there have been a number of changes to the management structure, the curriculum and the provision on the sites. The Braintree centre has closed: some staff and pupils have moved to the Heybridge site and other pupils to the Colchester and Clacton site. A new interim manager of the Heybridge Centre is now in post. The LA management of the service is being re-organised in order to provide a more effective network of support to mainstream schools.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 15 October 2007, the school was asked to

1. Develop a more consistent approach to curriculum provision across the different sites, particularly in the provision for pupils to make progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and
2. Use assessment more consistently to guide pupils' learning across the different sites, involving pupils more closely in understanding how well they are progressing.

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

Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory as pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning across all sites. The 2008 examination results show some pupils are making good progress in particular subjects, such as the new Entry Level Certificate, 'Preparation for Working Life'. In this subject 32 pupils were entered; 94% achieved passes with 30% gaining Level 2. Equally in GCSE science, of the 43 pupils who entered, 93% passed and 33% gained A* to C grades. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in ICT as a result of improvements made to the curriculum. Unit awards are now being offered in ICT and the number of entries for GCSE in Business and Communications Studies, which has a strong ICT element, has increased from four in 2007 to 10 in 2008. Almost all pupils who entered gained A- C grades and all passed, representing outstanding progress for this group. ICT hardware has just been installed in the Heybridge site and is due to be installed in the other sites. The increase in the range of accredited courses includes certificates in wider key skills, adult literacy and history.

Teachers are now recording data more systematically and tracking pupils' progress against national curriculum levels and/or GCSE/entry level grades. Pupils' progress towards the ASDAN Bronze/Silver Award is also recorded. Targets are set in English and mathematics in all sites and pupils are now involved in setting their own targets in relation to the newly introduced goal assessments. Pupils are also involved in reviewing their progress towards individual education plan targets. In a lesson seen, the pupil checked and marked her work against her own target which was reflected in well chosen learning objectives for the lesson. The satisfactory progress in both inspection issues is impacting positively on the progress pupils are now making.

The LA is providing satisfactory support in helping the service to move forward in the areas for improvement. For example, the review of the action plan shows that the LA has provided a budget of £600,000 to purchase high quality ICT equipment for all sites and this is now being installed on a rolling programme. However, despite the support from the LA, problems of recruitment of ICT specialist teachers still remain.

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

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Additional Inspector