

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



9 July 2010

Mrs Butwilowska
The Headteacher
Stratton Education Centre
St Phillips Road
Upper Stratton
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN2 7QP

Dear Mrs Butwilowska

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Stratton Education Centre

Following my visit to your school with Thomas Gibson, additional inspector, on 29 and 30 June 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – good.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State the chair of governors, the Director of Children's Services for Swindon and the inspection team.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Stratton Education Centre Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 29 and 30 June 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the work of the PRU, scrutinised documents and met with the School Improvement Partner, a representative from the local authority, the chair of the management committee, staff who have responsibility for leadership and management of improvement and students.

Inspectors visited The Stratton Education Centre, Riverside Centre, Youth Education Project (YEP), The Hillside Study Centre and Hospital and Home Education Service and the Adolescent Unit School. The Swindon Creative Education Project, which caters for Year 11 students, was not visited because there were no lessons taking place.

Context

An interim headteacher has been appointed and has assumed responsibility for leading the PRU. Senior leadership roles and responsibilities have been restructured.

Students' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Baseline assessments have been completed and the PRU now has an accurate view of students' starting points. Assessment data are being entered into the recently-established computer-based management information system and the resulting information is being used to set challenging medium and long-term targets for students. Evidence from the observation of students' work and the school's tracking data suggests that most students are making satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and that outcomes in external examinations may be an improvement on those achieved last year. In some centres, almost all students are likely to meet or exceed their targets.

Other relevant student outcomes

Most students behave well and they are developing positive attitudes to learning. There has been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions over the last year and attendance continues to improve. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of enrichment activities that benefit their community. Girls at the Hillside Centre are actively involved in designing and painting a mural to improve the environment for learning. Hospital pupils worked with a local artist to produce an original piece of plaster-based artwork and this and other students' work is displayed around the hospital. Students have a strong sense of community within their individual centres and they appreciate the effort being made to give the whole provision a corporate identity.



The effectiveness of provision

The profile of teaching quality is improving. Monitoring of teaching and learning has identified strengths and areas of development. A pattern of regular meetings has been established so that staff can work together on curriculum development, lesson planning and sharing good practice. A common system of assessment is in operation across all centres. Target setting has improved. In the best practice targets provide short steps which students can easily understand and students are encouraged and enabled to evaluate their own progress. Most students know and understand their academic and personal development targets. Teaching responsibilities have been restructured which will allow specialists to teach in their own area of expertise across the different centres. It is planned that students will have more choices in the subjects that they study and there will be more opportunities to participate in physical activities. A common timetable is planned to be introduced across all centres, with the exception of the therapeutic centres where teaching and learning are more personalised to accommodate students' therapies.

There is now a stronger focus on reintegrating students in to mainstream schools. However, the lack of information regarding students who go on to further education prevents a full evaluation of the success of reintegration at this level.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve all aspects of provision at Youth Education Project to bring about improved outcomes for students that are at least satisfactory by the start of the summer term 2010 – satisfactory
- improve the curriculum at Stratton by:
 - providing opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11 to study science
 - increasing the taught time for primary-aged pupils who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools to the recommended level, and providing them with a broader curriculum – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher is promoting a strong corporate identity for the PRU. She has raised expectations and is developing a cohesive community. Staff welcome the opportunity for centres to work more closely together and adopt common practices and procedures. Middle leaders are taking greater responsibility for driving improvement with a focus on learning. Self-evaluation is more accurate and is based on good quality information from monitoring of all aspects of the school's work. An effective computer-based management-information system is being implemented and staff are being trained in its use. This is still at an early stage of development and has not had sufficient time to impact on outcomes for students.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that safeguarding regulations and duties at Secondary Creative Education Project, as highlighted by the inspection team, are fully met by the



end of October 2009 – not inspected on this visit, as there were no students at this centre

- urgently implement an effective management information system across the whole of the provision that will enable timely and efficient monitoring and evaluation of all of its work – good
- improve the quality of leadership and management of the PRU by:
 - ensuring that centre managers improve their skills at analysing and evaluating the work that goes on in their centres so that they are confident that all students are achieving to the best of their abilities
 - developing robust systems for self-evaluation which involve all staff
 - making good use of the information gathered through self-evaluation to establish a plan that reflects the PRU's vision and ambitions for improvement
 - ensuring the management committee is more effective in challenging and supporting the PRU and meets its statutory requirements – good.

External support:

The PRU has received a good balance of challenge and support from the management committee that includes senior representatives from the local authority. The senior adviser has contributed to the development of provision at YEP and the School Improvement Partner has provided good support, particularly in moderating judgements regarding the quality of teaching. Local authority advisers have worked with staff to strengthen provision in English and mathematics and in improving behaviour and attendance.

