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6 October 2011

Mrs Margaret Ryan
Warwickshire Pupil Re-Integration Unit
Pound Lane Centre
Pound Lane
Leamington Spa
CV7 8LA

Dear Mrs Ryan

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Warwickshire Pupil Re-Integration Unit

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

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 the Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Warwickshire.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010

In order to ensure that personal, social and academic outcomes for all pupils are at least satisfactory, the unit should work in partnership with the local authority to make the following improvements.

- As a matter of urgency, extend the range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and reduce significantly the use of fixed-term exclusions.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - increasing teachers' confidence and competence to teach whole classes effectively
 - ensuring that lessons give pupils the opportunity to work in groups as well as independently
 - using assessment data to plan lessons at an appropriately challenging level for each learner
 - ensuring that the activities are enjoyable and engaging
 - extending the availability and maximising the use of information and communication technology.
- Improve the curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 so that it effectively prepares pupils academically, personally and socially for a return to mainstream school.
- Ensure that single-roll pupils receive their statutory entitlement to full-time education.
- Monitor and evaluate rigorously the impact of all of the unit's work and use this information judiciously to tackle all areas of weakness.

Special measures: monitoring of Warwickshire Pupil Re-Integration Unit

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 4 October 2011

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, staff with a range of responsibilities, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Management Committee and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.

Context

There is currently consultation about full closure of the pupil referral unit. Following the last visit, the redundancies as a result of the restructuring have been implemented. There are now the equivalent of 17.9 full-time teaching staff, a full-time interim headteacher and the equivalent of 14 full-time learning support assistants. One of the assistant headteachers has taken over the role of inclusion and special educational needs coordinator. The majority of pupils being taught at the pupil referral unit are now based at the Pound Lane site, although the two primary pupils and recently excluded pupils are being educated at the Keresley site. The pupil referral unit has successfully commissioned places for 48 pupils at local colleges and these places are being monitored closely by the senior leadership team and a member of the local authority.

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

The progress made by primary pupils continued to improve last term and many of those leaving Year 6 had gained levels in English, mathematics and science appropriate for their age. Last term, additional support and intervention also helped to improve the progress being made by pupils in Year 11. As a result, more gained qualifications than had been anticipated earlier in the year. Although progress made by pupils in other year groups was better last term than previously, it remains inadequate. The pupils at colleges are positive about what they have learnt so far this term. Those who spoke to the inspector were very positive about the progress they have made already in the three weeks since the start of the term.

Although there has been some improvement, the progress being made by pupils being educated at the pupil referral unit remains inadequate. In some lessons pupils make adequate progress, but there are still too many lessons where progress is inadequate. This is directly linked to the quality of teaching. Low expectations of pupils' abilities and a lack of careful planning to meet individual needs hampers the progress pupils are able to make, and this contributes to poor behaviour. Where teachers plan a range of learning activities based on a reasonable assessment of

individual pupils' needs, work is more motivating and helps pupils to make better progress.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour and attendance have improved significantly for the cohort who are attending college courses. This was exemplified by the mature way in which pupils were able to talk to the inspector about their experiences. The opportunities provided by the colleges are helping to improve pupils' economic well-being and the links to their futures and the world of work are made clear. Pupils relish being treated in a more mature way and the vast majority rise to the high expectations of their behaviour. There is a very small group who have not managed to sustain reasonable behaviour at college and who were excluded on the Friday before this inspection. The behaviour of those being educated at the pupil referral unit site remains mixed. There are still too many occasions when fixed-term exclusions are used, although the number of pupils repeatedly involved is reducing. There is a lack of consistency in the ways staff manage behaviour and no consistent strategy to encourage more use of praise and rewards. Pupils usually behave well in the lessons where work is varied and motivating. In these lessons, staff frequently give ongoing low level praise both for the work undertaken and the effort being made and this helps to motivate pupils. As a result, they are more engaged and strive to improve their work. The behaviour of those pupils who were re-integrated into mainstream schools last term and a few working towards re-integration this term has also improved considerably, and this contributes to the success they are experiencing so far this term in their new placements.

Attendance has improved considerably for many pupils but there are still too many who do not attend frequently enough. During the inspection attendance was high for those on college courses but was low for those attending the pupil referral unit base.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement.

- As a matter of urgency, extend the range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and reduce significantly the use of fixed-term exclusions – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

After a great amount of support and coaching from personnel at the local authority as well as from within the unit, teaching is improving very slowly. However, the improvements are not consistent and there remain pockets of teaching that are deeply inadequate. In these cases, lessons are poorly planned so that the work does not build upon prior learning or take into account the specific needs of the pupils.

For example, teachers using complex text copied from text books when there is clear assessment information available to show that pupils have low reading levels, and a pupil with significant visual impairment being asked to read from the whiteboard or not given large-font resources. At times, teachers and support staff give little time for pupils to think or work without being prompted. Where teaching is better, planning is secure and teachers check the pupils' understanding so that they can make adjustments to ensure pupils can make as much progress as possible.

There have been good improvements made to the curriculum on offer. All but two pupils have been accessing full-time provision and for these two it is a very short term arrangement. The unit is now in the position of arranging alternative full-time provision for those pupils excluded from college. At the time of this inspection this had not been fully resolved. The college packages are flexible for differing levels of attainment and seek to ensure those capable of higher level qualifications are on courses that provide enough challenge. Pupils showing specific interests can access suitable courses, while at the same time there is a clear focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills at a level appropriate to their previous learning. The primary curriculum for two pupils awaiting placements continues to match the expectations of mainstream schools so that pupils are well prepared for re-integration. For secondary age pupils, the balance of curriculum areas is carefully planned to ensure life skills and active opportunities are regularly available, as well as opportunities for developing more academic skills. Some of these opportunities are not implemented as well as they are planned.

There has been positive progress in ensuring statutory assessment processes are being suitably followed so that information is being collated and shared more effectively. However, even though more is known about pupils' individual needs, these are not being met consistently in lessons.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory.
- Improve the curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 so that it effectively prepares pupils academically, personally and socially for a return to mainstream school – good.
- Ensure that single-roll pupils receive their statutory entitlement to full-time education – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

By working with a range of partners, including local schools, colleges and other organisations, for example the Positive about Young People team, there has been a suitable focus on securing appropriate placements for the majority of pupils. The success of these placements, for so many pupils so far, is a credit to this work. The

model of one member of the senior staff being accountable for the attendance, progress and behaviour of the group of pupils at each college is a good model and one which is suitable for pupils across all aspects of the provision. These clear lines of accountability also support the management committee in their monitoring role. Recognising the impact of a reduced staff team and the current consultation about the possible future of the unit, the senior team have established and planned suitable arrangements for all pupils on roll. With support from the local authority leaders have secured a considerable amount of training and support for staff, although not all staff have taken advantage of these opportunities.

The introduction of joint planning meetings is another good example of high levels of input to help improve pupils' learning. However, staff skills are variable and without a clear steer from leaders staff struggle to move away from discussing what to do rather than what pupils need to learn next. The agenda of evaluating prior learning, planning the next steps of learning for individuals and then planning the lesson and staff roles to address these is only beginning to emerge. The messages promoting a consistent approach to helping pupils to behave in a way that helps them focus on their learning and become more responsible for their own actions are less clear than many others. Although poorer behaviour is often closely linked to the quality of teaching, there are too few possible rewards and motivators consistently available for pupils. The management committee is providing suitable challenge for leaders at the unit and has a particular focus on ensuring exclusions follow due process and are reducing.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement.

- Monitor and evaluate rigorously the impact of all of the unit's work and use this information judiciously to tackle all areas of weakness area for improvement – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide positive support for the pupil referral unit. This includes training and coaching for staff to help increase pupil engagement and progress. There has been considerable success identifying suitable alternative provision which is also supported by the local authority and now support is focusing upon helping to ensure placements are successful. Links with the local authority for progressing statutory assessment have improved. Finding other placements for pupils with statements of special educational needs has been a little slow at times, particularly where pupils have been excluded from independent special schools. The majority of primary pupils were placed by the end of last term, although two remain at the pupil referral unit. There is some confusion about the re-integration arrangements for one of these pupils which needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Currently, the pupil has good full-time attendance at the unit and a full-

time placement in mainstream is required. The local authority is proposing to close all primary provision at the pupil referral unit by the end of October 2011.