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Mrs Marion Aust
Executive Headteacher
Kingsfield Centre
Chilton Way
Stowmarket
IP14 1SZ

Dear Mrs Aust

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Kingsfield Centre

Following my visit to your school on 1 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the centre's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the centre was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in October 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The centre is not making enough progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation. This monitoring inspection raised serious concerns about the behaviour and safety of pupils, and the quality of leadership and management. The centre should be re-inspected at the earliest opportunity.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Management Committee, and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013

- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all lesson planning matches effectively the needs of individual pupils by setting learning objectives based on what they already know, understand and can do
 - ensuring consistent and effective teaching of literacy across the school
 - raising expectations of what pupils should do independently
 - involving pupils consistently in reviewing their own work and behaviour and considering how they can improve them further
 - making sure that the monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching takes place in all of the school's centres and focuses on whether pupils are making good progress over time.

- Improve pupils' achievement so that they all make at least the progress expected for their age and starting points by:
 - accurately assessing their starting points in each subject and setting ambitious yet realistic targets for their progress based on available national comparative data
 - monitoring rigorously the progress pupils make towards these targets and amending teaching approaches or providing additional support if they are not on track
 - making sure that progress towards targets is discussed with pupils and their parents
 - monitoring the effectiveness of additional funding for pupils at risk of underachievement.

- Improve information and guidance so that all pupils have a thorough understanding of what they need to achieve to fulfil their aspirations.

- Improve behaviour in the Kingsfield Alternative Provision Centre (KAP) by:
 - raising expectations so that pupils are prepared better for when they leave
 - discussing these expectations with pupils to make clear how they can improve
 - introducing clearer systems so that pupils understand how well they are doing, and when and how they need to do better
 - monitoring thoroughly pupils' behaviour and responding effectively where this shows insufficient progress is being made.

- Improve attendance by:
 - tackling rigorously poor attendance so that improvement matches the success achieved already with a few
 - requiring pupils to attend school on Friday afternoons
 - ensuring the register is completed accurately at the KAP.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 1 October 2014.

Evidence

The inspector met with the executive headteacher, centre manager, the Chair of the Management Committee and two representatives of the local authority. The inspector spent the whole day at the Kingsfield Alternative Provision Centre (KAP) to assess the impact of actions taken by leaders and managers to improve students' behaviour and the quality of provision.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a teacher has moved from KAP to the Kingsfield centre and a teacher from K46 has moved to KAP. One teacher travels between two bases to teach English. Ten pupils attend KAP, two of whom are on temporary, part-time timetables due to their poor behaviour. The temporary lead teacher, who was in post at the time of the last monitoring visit, left in April 2014. The substantive post holder, who was expected to return in September, made the decision not to return to KAP in July 2014. A second lead teacher left the service in June 2014; the third lead teacher became SENCO for the provision in September 2014 and also retains a monitoring role for teaching and learning.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders and managers are not doing enough to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Some improvements to the quality of provision have been made but this is having little impact on raising achievement. Results in GCSE examinations in 2014 were poor; very few pupils achieved what was expected of them in mathematics or science. Only two pupils were entered for GCSE English examinations. Although almost all pupils achieved an entry level award in mathematics, only two pupils did so in English.

Leaders and managers are not improving pupils' behaviour. Their own records show that pupils' regular lack of engagement and disrespect for staff leads to a disorderly environment that puts them and others at risk. Pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes, coupled with low attendance, presents a major barrier to raising achievement.

The management committee is ensuring that the KAP becomes integrated within the Kingsfield Centre and is working closely with the local authority to enable this to happen. They are not using the centres' improvement plans well enough to monitor the quality or the rate of improvements being made. They feel that the centre is moving in the right direction but lack the data and other information they need to confirm whether the actions taken to raise achievement, improve provision, behaviour and attendance are making a real difference.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The improved teamwork noted at the time of the last monitoring inspection has continued to develop. This was clearly evident when staff worked together to diffuse and resolve incidents of serious misbehaviour during the inspection. They know individual pupils well and show patience, tolerance and resilience when dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Actions to improve teaching, including better quality planning, sharing of lesson objectives and marking of pupils' work are becoming more consistent.
- The curriculum now includes opportunities for some pupils to experience the work-place and develop the personal skills they need for the next stage of their education or training.
- There are new procedures in place this year to replace the previous online assessment scheme and provide a clearer overview of pupils' attainment and progress.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders and managers' expectations of how pupils should behave themselves are too low. Procedures to manage challenging behaviour are ineffective. For example, pupils' regular swearing is challenged but makes little difference to the way they speak to staff or each other. Smoking on the school site is condoned by staff.
- Pupils' poor behaviour, including leaving lessons, wandering outside and using mobile phones, regularly disrupts their learning and that of others. They are unaware of the expectations of them, and are regularly rude and disrespectful to staff. At times, pupils' poor behaviour escalates into serious incidents.
- Expectations of what pupils should do independently are too low. For example, staff take breakfast orders and prepare food for pupils even though they are quite capable of doing these themselves. In lessons, staff negotiate with pupils and cajole them into doing work in English, mathematics and science, rather than making it clear what is expected of them.
- Leaders and managers are not monitoring closely the amount of time pupils are engaged in learning. Curriculum time is often wasted. For example, pupils do not join lessons until 10 o'clock each morning and regular breaks after each lesson interrupts learning and leads to pupils smoking on the centre's site. Board games, timetabled on Friday afternoons, do not constitute high quality learning. The timetable does not include opportunities to learn using computers.

- The executive headteacher does not spend enough time in the KAP to fully resolve the issues raised in the last inspection. Procedures to monitor teaching, analyse progress data and scrutinise pupils' work are not systematic, and are not leading to significant improvements to the quality of teaching or to pupils' achievement.
- High absence rates noted at the time of the last inspection persist. Overall, attendance remains well below what is expected nationally. Leaders and managers are unable to illustrate the impact they are having on improving attendance because they do not monitor it well enough.

External support

The local authority has maintained its support to improve lesson planning and have provided further training in English and mathematics teaching. A review of the KAP carried out earlier this year found some improvement but also noted a lack of consistency in teaching and in the quality of the curriculum. Since then, they have not checked that leaders and managers have used this review to generate improvements. The local authority's support for managing behaviour is having little impact on tackling the concerns identified in the last inspection. They share the same concerns about pupils' behaviour raised during this monitoring inspection.