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Ms Elaine Mallen
Head of Centre
Scarborough Pupil Referral Service
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Dear Ms Mallen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scarborough Pupil Referral Unit

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and the management committee are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- Strengthen the school development plan by translating your expectations into precise measures to help all leaders to evaluate and sharpen the focus of improvement work.
- Take steps to ensure that recent curriculum developments are securely underpinned by accurate assessment and detailed subject knowledge.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, teachers and the vice-chair of the governing body to discuss

the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority. You accompanied me on visits to lessons in which we looked at pupils' books and observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their learning and their views of the changes you have introduced. I evaluated the centre's planning for improvement, pupils' progress data and the work of the management committee.

Main findings

Together with the executive headteacher, you have continued with a very clear agenda for improvement following the previous inspection. A structured programme of development is taking place to address all the areas requiring improvement that were identified at the recent inspection. A systematic programme of staff training is helping to drive improvements throughout the centre in teaching, assessment and in staff management of pupils' behaviour. You have strengthened the appraisal of teachers' work through very clear feedback following your checks on classroom teaching and training. Plans to support individual teachers are unequivocal, clearly setting out what improvements are needed and when, with clear measurable outcomes. This level of detail and critical insight is not yet applied to the school development plan, which currently remains in draft form.

The external review of governance has been completed and the management committee is beginning to act on the recommendations. Leaders of the management committee are aware of their responsibilities as a result of recent training, and a credible plan is in place to develop governance further. A sharper oversight of the centre's work is emerging following changes to the way meetings are managed and recorded. Leaders and governors are acting on the findings of an external review of their use of pupil premium funding. Together, you have drawn up a plan to develop this area of work further. An analysis of performance information and spending has been carried out and an initial report of the centre's findings has been published. Leaders and governors have successfully taken action to improve the quality and detail of information for parents on the school website.

Pupils are benefiting from the modifications that you have made to the curriculum. Key stage 3 pupils are enjoying and participating willingly in weekly physical education and food technology lessons, and the wider range of options introduced at key stage 4 have extended choice and study opportunities for older pupils.

Better support is provided to pupils who are angry or upset. You are sharing specialist expertise more methodically across the centre, and more staff are confidently using the skills they have developed through recent training to calm pupils and return them to class more quickly. Pupils say that they feel listened to. They appreciate the additional spaces you have created for them to use and better support provided by trained staff who are helping them to manage their emotions. Records show that incidents of poor behaviour are reducing, more pupils are staying in lessons, and there are signs that attendance is starting to improve.

These changes are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils listen and concentrate in lessons. They are making swifter progress in literacy and numeracy and know the next steps they need to take. In our discussions you recognised that further work is needed. You are working to ensure that the recent curriculum developments, new courses and qualifications are securely underpinned by accurate assessment practices. You are also planning to develop teachers' thorough knowledge of the subjects they are now required to teach.

External support

The local authority has a good working relationship with the headteacher. Support and advice is well focused and complements that provided through the formal partnership with the executive headteacher of Brompton Hall School. Although actions are being taken to develop pupils' behaviour, learning and progress, they are in spite of the limitations of the current site rather than because of it. The local authority needs to act swiftly to further the plans for relocating the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector