

Serco Inspections
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 6799169
Direct email: mathew.mitchell@serco.com

23 September 2013

Ms Carol Barker
Head of School
Woodlands School
Beechdale Road
Aspley
Nottingham
NG8 3EZ

Dear Ms Barker

Special measures monitoring inspection of Woodlands School

Following my visit to your school on 17 September 2013, 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 school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with the executive headteacher and head of school, six further school leaders and members of staff, two members of the governing body and the special educational needs adviser from Nottingham City Council. A range of documents, including ones regarding pupils' progress and behaviour were considered. The school's post inspection action plan and the local authority's statement of action were evaluated.

Context

There have been no changes to the management of the school since the inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Following the inspection in June, the senior leaders and governors took immediate action to begin to address areas for improvements required for the school to become good. For example, the concerns raised about the inappropriate locking of doors to prevent pupils from leaving classrooms were addressed straightaway by removing these locks. The external fire doors to two classrooms where the school has concerns about pupils leaving have been fitted with closings that restrict their exit while allowing staff to evacuate the room in case of emergency. A safeguarding audit has recently been undertaken by the local authority in response to the issues identified at the inspection. Action has been also taken to ensure the accurate completion of registers so that senior leaders are assured of the whereabouts and safety of pupils who are studying off-site. This action includes a daily check on these pupils.

A protocol has been written and circulated for the appropriate use of the reflection rooms, where pupils are escorted when they are anxious or disruptive and need an opportunity to calm down. This protocol is not yet incorporated in the school's behaviour policy, nor are there arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of their use. Similarly, the school has re-circulated the behaviour policy to all members of staff. However, there has been insufficient consideration given to how consistency of use will be monitored and its effectiveness will be evaluated.

There are several sources of recorded information about pupils' behaviour; however, this information is not pulled together. Furthermore, not all interruptions to pupils' learning are recorded; for example, the use of the 'calm chairs' within classrooms. There is therefore not a full picture of behaviour that can be analysed alongside information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, so that the most effective practice can be disseminated and areas for improvement can be identified.

Arrangements are being made to carry out joint observations of teaching with the local authority's special educational needs adviser in order to monitor improvement and provide further guidance to teachers.

There is regular tracking of pupils' progress. There remains, however, some confusion about the progress that should be expected of pupils, given their age and starting points, and in the extent to which the tracking adequately shows whether a pupil is making expected progress.

The school's post-inspection action plan identifies many actions that will be undertaken to address the weaknesses identified at the inspection in June. However, the plan's success criteria, and the planned monitoring and evaluation activities, do

not focus sufficiently on improvements in pupils' learning and their behaviour to show if effective action is being taken. As a consequence, governors are not able to hold the school's leaders to account sufficiently for the required improvements.

The single central register meets requirements.

The local authority's planned support is appropriate for the needs of the school. In addition to the safeguarding audit and joint teaching observations, mentioned above, the authority has brokered collaborative support from a headteacher of an outstanding special school in the authority. The school has also arranged support from a specialist teacher to help improve the teaching of pupils with a range of needs in the same class, and for teaching pupils who have dyslexia. The local authority's statement of action does not, however, identify sufficiently the small steps of progress towards addressing the required improvements so that the authority has confidence that effective action is being taken.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement/action plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers..

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charlie Henry
Her Majesty's Inspector