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8 July 2015

Mrs E Entwistle  
Operational Headteacher  
Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School  
Russett House  
35 Russett Close  
Gloucester  
GL4 0RQ

Dear Mrs Entwistle

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 2015, 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. Please pass my thanks on to the staff, children, members of the Management Committee and others I met during my visit and to those pupils and staff who provided the breakfast I shared with them.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. 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 recent section 5 inspection. The school should consider how to:

- demonstrate the progress pupils make in their all-round personal development and preparation for their next steps.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive and operational headteachers, three members of the Management Committee, including the Chair, the three centre leaders, three representatives from the local authority, a representative from an external provider and with teachers, including those undertaking outreach work in Gloucestershire primary schools, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The inspector visited lessons with the operational

headteacher, looked at samples of work and pupils' records, and spoke to pupils about their work. The school's self-evaluation and the three centre action plans were evaluated.

## **Context**

Following the inspection in March, the reorganisation of alternative provision in Gloucestershire was instigated in April 2015. At this time, an executive headteacher and a Management Committee with oversight of all three maintained alternative provision schools in Gloucestershire took up their roles. The operational headteacher for the Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School, responsible for the three centres that make up this provision, also took up her post at this time.

Together, the three centres provide places for all primary and secondary pupils permanently excluded from schools in this part of Gloucestershire, places for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion and short-term places for pupils who need support with improving their behaviour, as well places for other pupils in need of school places. Each centre has a different 'mix' of pupils. The school works with a range of other providers to ensure that pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 4, have a curriculum that meets their needs well and prepares them for the next stage in their education or training.

Almost half of the teaching staff, teachers and teaching assistants, will be new in post in September 2015, although some will move from temporary to permanent roles.

## **Main findings**

The operational headteacher provides exceptional leadership and is supported extremely well by the executive headteacher. Together they form a powerful and highly effective team. They have a clear vision and are highly ambitious for the school. They are working well with the three centre leaders to provide a clear direction, change the culture in the school and have already raised expectations significantly. They have established robust and consistent systems across the three centres, for example to monitor attendance, but with sufficient flexibility in other ways to match the nature of each centre and meet the needs of the pupils in them. The Management Committee provides a good balance of challenge and support and is increasingly better placed to ask challenging questions to hold the school's leaders to account.

The operational headteacher, centre leaders and other staff have a deep understanding of the nature of the children in the school and their individual characteristics. There is an increasing focus on establishing 'personalised outcomes' for each pupil so that they are prepared well for their next steps: reintegration into their mainstream school, including transfer from primary to secondary school; preparing them well for admission into another school; or for progression to a post-

16 provider, including apprenticeships and courses at the local further education college. The school's approach is underpinned by the need for the pupils sent to the school to learn and make progress. However, the school ensures that it establishes the right conditions for each pupil to be able to learn well. This means analysing precisely and accurately the improvements in pupils' attendance, behaviour, attitudes and learning skills needed, as well as building their resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem. The headteacher is building teachers' skills so that they can support each pupils' all-round personal development as well as securing their academic progress.

The outreach work of the school is valued highly by other schools. The work of the outreach team has reduced the number of pupils excluded in the local authority. The team also works very effectively to support the re-integration of pupils back into schools. This work will be undertaken by a dedicated team that can focus entirely on this work rather than being split between this and other work in one of more of the centres.

Since April, a wide range of actions have been taken and developments started. Many of these will not be fully implemented until September when the new and full teaching force is in place. The key changes that underpin the school's improvement are:

- robust and rigorous arrangements for tracking pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement during the day and over time, including small steps in learning and improvements in their reading, writing and mathematical skills
- improving pupils' behaviour by promoting and rewarding good behaviour and by careful evaluation of poor behaviour to help pupils improve
- the development of a 'pastoral curriculum' that will form part of each day to develop pupils' social, emotional, personal, behavioural and learning skills
- the structure of the school day to incorporate breakfast for the whole school community in each centre, the pastoral curriculum, core subjects and a range of activities matched well to each pupil
- developing 'nurture provision' for those pupils across a range of ages that enter the school with low levels of development
- using a detailed understanding of the aspects of teaching that need to improve to target the professional development of teachers.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. It was agreed that the inspector will undertake a further monitoring visit in the autumn 2015 to evaluate the impact of the changes to be implemented in September.

## **External support**

The school's progress is monitored carefully through the local authority project board and the work of the management committee.

The school needs support in ensuring that the secondary schools that permanently exclude pupils pass complete and high-quality information to the alternative provision school in good time to enable an analysis of strategies that have been previously used and any risks to be undertaken swiftly. Not all schools sending pupils to the alternative provision school for short-term places provide good quality work so that these pupils can continue to make progress in core subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Executive Headteacher, the Chair of the Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

James Sage

**Her Majesty's Inspector**