

# Kickstart

Telford College of Arts and Technology, Haybridge Road, Telford, TF1 2NP

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Behaviour and safety are inadequate because attendance is very low. Most students do not spend enough time at Kickstart to learn adequately.
- Too few students make progress at, or above, the expected rate. The gap between their attainment and that usually found for students of their age is not closing quickly enough.
- Teaching does not take sufficient account of individuals' gaps in learning. Teachers do not help students to make up lost ground and move forward at a fast enough rate.
- Staff do not use assessment information to develop personalised learning plans for each student or to set them demanding targets to aim for.
- The move to Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT) has not gone smoothly. Teething problems are still being ironed out.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Many of the systems and practices to support teaching and achievement are no longer used.
- Staff morale is low and they feel unsupported and disillusioned.
- The organisation of academic and vocational subjects does not always allow students to study courses they are interested in or that are at the right level for their abilities.
- Not enough time is given to students in Year 11 to complete their GCSE courses.
- Arrangements to keep students safe do not meet statutory requirements.
- The rationale behind the local authority's practice of placing New Directions students on Kickstart's roll without it providing any services is unclear.
- The expertise of the management committee has not been used well enough to monitor and improve provision.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students say they like Kickstart and there are very few recorded outbursts or incidents of bullying or harassment.
- Relationships between staff and students are good.
- Provision at the new Scott Centre for students at Key Stage 3 is effective. They enjoy their work and make rapid progress in lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed one lesson taught at Kickstart (Key Stage 4), one lesson taught at the Scott Centre (Key Stage 3), one session at Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT) where a Kickstart student was working alongside TCAT students, and one session at the NOVA motor vehicle maintenance training centre involving two Key Stage 4 students.
- Meetings were held with: the teacher-in-charge of Kickstart and her line manager in the local authority; the head of school for foundation learning at TCAT; the Chair of the Management Committee; the executive headteacher and lead teacher of the Scott Centre (for Key Stage 3 students); and the administrator of NOVA. Informal discussions were held with students at Kickstart, at the Scott Centre and at NOVA.
- There were too few responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers) to be shown. Two letters from parents of students at Key Stage 4 and a small survey of Key Stage 3 students' views were taken into account along with nine responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including: records of students' attendance, attainment and progress; records of the quality of teaching of Key Stage 4 staff; development plans; self-evaluation and reports to the management committee, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Judith Charlesworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- Kickstart was previously known as the 14-19 King Street Alternative Provision. It caters mainly for students at Key Stage 4 who have been permanently excluded, or are in danger of being permanently excluded, from their mainstream schools for behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. There are currently 26 students of this age on roll.
- All students have special educational needs supported at school action. No student has a statement of special educational needs; two are looked after by the local authority.
- An above-average proportion of students (not including New Directions or the Scott Centre) are known to be entitled to the pupil premium. This is extra government funding for certain groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Kickstart has undergone a move and staff restructuring since the previous inspection. The number of staff has been reduced and the posts of headteacher and assistant headteacher removed. There are currently three permanent teachers, including the teacher-in-charge, who teach English, mathematics, information and communication technology, environmental science and employability. A temporary teacher for art started at Kickstart on the first day of the inspection. The school has three permanent and two temporary teaching assistants.
- The provision was relocated to a suite of rooms in TCAT over the summer holidays and opened in September 2013. The teacher-in-charge, who took up post in September, has resigned.
- A recent local authority reorganisation and relocation of alternative provision for students in Key Stages 1 to 3 has also taken place. Students at Key Stage 3 who have been permanently excluded are now placed on Kickstart's roll but receive their education at the Scott Centre, which opened in early November 2013. This is managed by the headteacher of a local special school. There are currently two students in this age group on Kickstart's roll.
- For the past three years, a large number (average 75) of Year 11 students from mainstream schools have been put on Kickstart's roll for approximately the last two terms of their statutory schooling for various reasons. This arrangement is called 'New Directions'. Arrangements for their education remain the responsibility of their mainstream schools. While students have no actual involvement with Kickstart or its staff, their achievement is included in Kickstart's official performance data. This process is just beginning for this year although no New Directions students are yet on roll.
- Kickstart uses a range of alternative provision to supplement the education it provides. These are: TCAT; Sutton Hill Youth centre; AFC Telford Study centre; The Webb Youth Centre; Lil Missy Academy; NOVA Training; and The Education Development Service SEEDS Centre.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - fully implementing a system that identifies gaps in students' skills, knowledge and understanding in all academic subjects taught
  - using the information gained to develop tailored learning plans for each individual to build on their strengths and fill in gaps in learning alongside, or as part of, their academic courses
  - making clear to students what they should do to improve their work and achievement, through helpful verbal and written feedback
  - regularly monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and taking effective action to bring about improvement where weaknesses are identified.

- Improve students' achievement and increase their rate of progress by:
  - improving their attendance
  - establishing higher expectations of what students can achieve
  - providing courses and subjects that interest students and challenge them at a demanding level
  - considering each student's needs and ensuring that they have an effective balance of academic and vocational subjects to study, at the right level for their varying abilities
  - ensuring that students have enough taught time to complete academic courses.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements
  - re-establishing systems to check on and support the quality of teaching, teachers' work, and students' outcomes
  - ensuring that money received through the pupil premium is used to support those individuals eligible, and check regularly that it has an impact on their achievement
  - ensuring that the incoming teacher-in-charge has the appropriate resources, training and personnel to lead, manage and improve Kickstart effectively
  - increasing the monitoring role of the management committee, and regularly using the expertise of its members to support school improvement
  - working to provide suitable alternative provision and vocational opportunities that suit students' varying aptitudes and abilities.
  
- Gain clarity from the local authority about the inclusion of New Directions students on Kickstart's roll, in order to ensure that Kickstart's responsibilities are fully explained and met.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students' attainment on entry to Kickstart is generally below average for their age, often by a large margin. They make inadequate progress over Key Stage 4 and their attainment remains below average. While students attain various national qualifications, these do not always reflect their abilities and are often pitched at too low a level for more-able students. This was recognised by the local authority and contributed to the restructuring of its alternative provision to try to improve students' achievement.
- The achievement of New Directions students is also inadequate. Last year, the percentage who gained five GCSEs was only half the national average, and only a very small percentage gained English and mathematics GCSEs at A\* to C grades in comparison with around 66% nationally. This information is included in Kickstart's official, published performance data.
- Past assessments of Kickstart students show that too few improved their English and mathematics skills at the expected rate, or faster than usual. While students made progress, this was not fast enough to bring them closer to average for their age by the time they left Kickstart. In contrast, preliminary information and observation indicate that students at the Scott Centre make rapid progress.
- Commercial online assessments are used to determine each student's skills in English and mathematics when they first start at Kickstart, and at various times thereafter. However, the summary data do not allow easy interpretation to help the staff to accurately judge individuals' progress and provide suitable support programmes to improve it.
- This term, no whole-school system is in place to track students' attainment, progress or personal development at all. Individual teachers use different methods. These often relate to topic coverage, which does not allow managers to gain a clear overview of progress or make comparisons between subjects.
- Although done in the past, assessment information is not now used to provide special support programmes for students who have particular difficulties in learning, who are in receipt of the pupil premium, or to develop personal learning plans or targets. Pupil premium funding has not been used directly for the eligible students this term. Their attainment in English and mathematics in relation to other students has not been assessed as there is no current tracking information. Information on past students, however, shows that those eligible for free school meals achieved as well as or better than their peers in these subjects.
- Students' inadequate achievement is partly a result of their very low attendance. They are not in class enough to learn adequately. Current arrangements often mean that students who are absent do not have the opportunity to make up what they have missed. As a result, with such a lot of course content missed, they gain qualifications at a lower level than they should do for their abilities.
- Students' progress has slowed further this term as a result of the restructuring of staff, the organisation of teaching time and difficulties in gaining suitable vocational placements. There are too few opportunities for students to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

**The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- Teaching at Key Stage 4 has not produced good enough results over time, so leading to students' inadequate achievement. Little teaching was observed during the inspection due to students' absence, the organisation of the timetable and other prevailing factors.
- Indications are that teaching has deteriorated since the previous inspection. Care is not always taken to ensure that all students are equally involved in class, or that those who dominate discussions give others a chance to contribute. Formal monitoring and appraisal have not taken place since last summer, and the professional development of teachers has been limited. Most staff say they are unhappy with the current curriculum and arrangements at Kickstart and the negative impact these are having on their teaching and students' learning.
- Assessment information is used informally by teachers, who broadly understand students' capabilities in their subjects. However, it is not used to inform teaching so that students are helped to fill in gaps in their English, mathematics and other skills and move forward at a fast enough rate. While staff used to set targets to help each student understand what to aim for, this no longer happens. Marking is variable and does not always include guidance on how students could improve their work. These factors limit students' progress.
- Teaching assistants work effectively to support students' behaviour and concentration in class and when attending courses at TCAT. Relationships between staff and students are good. Students' work is often neat and well presented. Teaching for Key Stage 3 is very effective. Students are fully engaged by well-planned, enjoyable teaching that helps them to learn fast and understand exactly what they must do to reach higher levels.
- Students observed in TCAT and the NOVA training centre were well behaved and fully involved in their activities. They were enthusiastic about what they were doing. They used their initiative and showed great pleasure in, and understanding about, the process of stripping car engines down, cleaning and then re-assembling them.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- Students' attendance at Key Stage 4 is very low. The average attendance rate for students in Year 10 is just over 50%, and those in Year 11 attend for around 44% of the time. Attendance of students at Key Stage 3, so far, is much better than this.
- Unauthorised absence is very high, with almost all students having unauthorised absence. Many students' absence is almost entirely unauthorised. While the attendance of many individuals improves from that at their previous schools, this is not at nearly a high enough level. Poor attendance is a root cause of students' low achievement. Data for last year's New Directions students also indicate very low attendance.
- Previously detailed analysis of attendance has lapsed this term, apparently due to the pressure of time on staff. Nevertheless, parents and carers are usually notified when students do not attend, and Kickstart gets good support from the local authority in meeting with parents and carers to try to improve attendance. Where necessary, non-attendance is resulting in court proceedings. Nevertheless, attendance remains stubbornly low as students are not sufficiently engaged with what is offered to want to attend regularly. The consistent use of the students' reward and sanction system for behaviour and attendance has also slipped, and does not support improvement in either aspect.
- There have been no recorded incidents of bullying, racism or homophobic behaviour. Most

students remain in the social area of Kickstart at break times, particularly as toast and hot drinks are available throughout the day. However, they have the option of going into TCAT where there are various food outlets and social areas, and they travel independently to their alternative provisions in the community.

- Not all students behave safely out of school hours, and a few sometimes come to Kickstart under the influence of drugs. Kickstart does not always comply with alternative provisions' arrangements to ensure students' safety and well-being; for example, by completing paperwork before a placement begins. This puts the students at risk.
- Students say they like Kickstart because it is small and they get more attention from adults with whom they are on good terms. They enjoy conversations with adults and are generally compliant in class and in the social area. Key Stage 3 students' attitudes to learning, and to each other, adults and visitors, are very positive.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Too many changes have been introduced to Kickstart too quickly. The relocation of Kickstart has not gone as smoothly as anticipated. There are still numerous teething problems, and many previously established systems and practices have fallen by the wayside as staff struggle with the new arrangements, a change in their roles and a reduction in their numbers.
- Further staff changes took place at half term, including the loss of experienced administrative support. The lack of properly working information technology systems has also caused considerable difficulties. Staff inspection questionnaires and comments indicate that most staff are unhappy about leadership and management and the level of support they have recently received.
- Kickstart should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.
- A recent report to the management committee shows that the teacher-in-charge is fully aware of Kickstart's many difficulties and the effect they are having on students' outcomes. However, actions to improve the situation are not well outlined.
- The curriculum does not meet students' needs, which is a concern expressed by a small number of parents. Collaboration with TCAT in providing vocational and other subjects is still being developed and many students do not have the vocational or alternative provision placements anticipated. Some are not able to pursue a course they are interested in, or a course at a high enough level. Alternative arrangements have been made with external providers to provide students with 25 hours a week education. However, these are not always ideal for a variety of reasons, including some repetition of Kickstart work, which students find boring.
- Year 11 students attend Kickstart for the equivalent of two days a week, with attendance at alternative provision making up the rest of their time. This is not enough time for them to complete GCSE courses started in Year 10, when provision is made for four days' attendance. Not enough attention is paid to ensuring students' literacy and numeracy skills are built up systematically and applied in other subjects and when students are at alternative provisions. These factors, together with students' low attendance and the current organisation of teaching where missed work is often not made up, contribute significantly to students' low achievement.
- The local authority and teacher-in-charge are aware that teaching needs to improve. Some support has been provided by the local authority to improve teachers' skills. However, regular

checking on teaching and setting targets for improvement have lapsed this term and professional development has been limited.

- Learning and achievement are no longer closely analysed because the systems for tracking attainment and progress across the school are not being fully used. Students in need of additional support to give them equal opportunities for achieving as well as their peers are not identified. Additional money received for those students eligible for the pupil premium is not currently directed towards improving these individuals' achievement. Teachers no longer set targets for each student to help them understand how to improve their skills and reach higher levels. This limits their achievement.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students do not meet statutory requirements. While all adults are checked appropriately to ensure their suitability to work with young people, their details are not always immediately recorded on a single central record as required.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The local authority and the management committee are aware of most of Kickstart's weaknesses through detailed reports from the teacher-in-charge and frequent visits by the Vice-Chair, who is the local authority line manager for the provision. However, there has been insufficient action taken until recently.
- The management committee understands that teaching is inadequate, and that the local authority has supported improvement through some in-service training. Members are aware that target setting to improve staff's work has so far been limited to the teacher-in-charge, and that the appraisal schedule is running behind. They recognise that students are not performing well enough and that their attendance is very low.
- The Chair of the Management Committee is very clear about the improvements needed. She had already scheduled a series of meetings to thoroughly review aspects and set strategies for improvement, beginning with safeguarding. However, the management committee has so far had little impact in challenging leaders or securing improvements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135950
<b>Local authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	426914

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	28
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Paynter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 642541
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