

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0121 679 9146
Direct email: clare.benson@serco.com



Ms Julie Finch
Kickstart
Telford College of Arts and Technology
Haybridge Road
Telford
TF1 2NP

Dear Ms Finch

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kickstart

Following my visit with James McNeillie Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 2 July 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 27–28 November 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- 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.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 July 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of school and deputy head of school for the Key Stage 4 provision at Kickstart, and the head of school for the Key Stage 3 provision at the Scott Centre. They also met the Chair of the Management Committee and a representative from the local authority. Throughout the day, inspectors spoke informally with students.

Context

Two teaching staff who were not present at the time of the monitoring inspection on 11 February 2014 have returned to work. One teacher was absent.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In Key Stage 3, there is a range of evidence, including the work in students' books, which indicates that students are making at least expected progress in English and mathematics. Teachers have regularly marked students' work and identified what students need to do to improve.

In Key Stage 4, students' progress is patchy. There is some evidence in students' mathematics work books that shows they are making some progress. The data collated on student achievement do not match the quality of work being produced by students. Most worrying is the fact that senior leaders do not know about the achievement of many students who access alternative provision.

Poor attendance, the students' poor attitudes to work and ineffective teaching is preventing students in Key Stage 4 from making adequate progress.

The quality of teaching

Senior leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching is far too generous. Checks on teaching have been made since the previous inspection visit but some teachers who have returned recently are not included in the summary of those checks.

Most of the teaching observed in Key Stage 4 raised concerns. Teachers failed to match tasks to students' abilities. Teachers had low expectations and appeared reluctant to praise students. In one information technology lesson, where only two students were present, one student completed no work and the other student said work was far too easy. In contrast, during a mathematics lesson the teacher was able to challenge pupils and keep them engaged in learning.

Some Key Stage 4 students are not receiving full-time education.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is poor in Key Stage 4. Some teachers are unable to engage students in their learning. In some lessons, for example, students just sat and listened to music on their android phones using headphones. In one lesson, the student had the volume of music so high that it disturbed the rest of the lesson. Many lessons were disrupted by students coming and going without the consent of the teacher. Students were seen to be rude to teachers and other staff. Students told inspectors that if they remove themselves from lessons a teaching assistant follows them to keep them safe.

Attendance in Key Stage 4 is well below the national average. Some students vote with their feet when placed on alternative provision programmes and have extremely low attendance rates. In total contrast, the behaviour of students in Key Stage 3 is good. Students talked positively about lessons and how they felt safe. Attendance has improved in Key Stage 3.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

There has been too little done since the previous monitoring inspection to deal with deep seated staffing issues. The teaching team is dysfunctional because they do not share common goals. Some staff are resistant to change that is much needed. There remains a lack of clarity between senior leaders and the local authority on who should tackle these issues.

Checks on the quality of teaching have taken place since the previous monitoring inspection and senior leaders have checked students' work books. However, the reported findings appear too generous when inspectors checked students' work.

An external review of governance has taken place which has highlighted a number of concerns. The management committee, for example, have not been focused enough on the work of Kickstart and had no clear targets for senior leaders to use to evaluate their performance. A decision has now been made to have a management committee solely focused on the work of Kickstart. Targets have been set for senior leaders which will now be monitored.

Safeguarding requirements are met.

External support

The local authority's support is not effective. There has been insufficient support and challenge which has led to senior leaders having an unrealistic view of the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Crucial training for senior leaders on how to

effectively use pupil premium funds has not been arranged and so there is little understanding of how this money is used and what impact it is having.