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Julie Finch  
Headteacher  
KICKSTART  
Telford College of Arts and Technology  
Haybridge Road  
Telford  
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Dear Ms Finch

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of KICKSTART**

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 2015, 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 fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher to teach information and communication technology (ICT) 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 and Wrekin.

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries  
**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.

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.

## **Report on the fifth monitoring inspection on 2 July 2015**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, the inspector observed a celebration assembly and students' participation in a range of sporting activities as part of the 'rewards day'. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Management Committee, a representative of the local authority and the school's education welfare officer. Informal discussions were held with students and Kickstart and Telford College of Arts and Technology staff. The inspector took account of the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were too few responses on Parent View for these to be considered. The inspector scrutinised students' books and a range of documentation including the school's monitoring records of the quality of teaching, the headteacher's report to the management committee and the minutes of its meetings. Additional documentation was scrutinised, including information about students' behaviour, attainment, attendance and the vetting checks on staff new to the school.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in March 2015, the academy conversion date of 1 September 2015 has been confirmed. The academy will be sponsored by Telford College of Arts and Technology and will still be known as Kickstart.

At the time of this inspection, students in Year 11 had completed their studies and had left the school. Year 10 students were involved in a 'rewards day'. As a consequence, it was not possible to observe students' learning.

The school has a vacancy for a teacher of ICT and is using supply teachers to cover this subject.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Information provided by the school shows that students' knowledge, skills and understanding continue to improve, especially in English and mathematics. All of the Year 11 students leaving the school at the end of June 2015 are predicted to achieve a GCSE or functional skills qualification in these subjects. In addition, a large majority of students are predicted to achieve a level 1 (equivalent to GCSE grades D to G) or level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grades A\* to C) qualifications in art, ICT and other subjects through learning away from the school at alternative provision. For example, students have achieved level 1 or level 2 qualifications in motor vehicle maintenance and repair, hair and beauty and employability skills. Almost all of the Year 11 students have secured a place in further education, employment or training.

The work in Year 10 students' books shows that an increasing number of students are beginning to make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics. Gaps in students' knowledge and skills are narrowing. However, students still have insufficient opportunities to solve problems or reason mathematically or to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than in English and mathematics. As a result, students' progress is not as quick as it could be.

### **The quality of teaching**

The work in students' books and information about how well students are doing confirm the findings of school leaders that students are moving on in their learning because of increasing consistency in the quality of teaching. Teachers continue to act on the areas for improvement raised in monitoring inspections and on those identified by school leaders. For example, it is clear that the checks on how well students are doing have improved. However, not all teachers make sure that students act upon the advice to improve their work, especially in mathematics.

An increasing number of teachers are using the information they have about students' knowledge, understanding and abilities to plan and set work at the right level of difficulty. However, a minority of teachers do not insist on demanding work or set work that is difficult enough. As a consequence, students in these classes do not do as well as they should.

Students' literacy and numeracy skills, while improving, are not developed in subjects other than in English and mathematics. The school has introduced a whole-school literacy policy. However, a majority of teachers are not applying the policy consistently.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

As noted in the previous monitoring inspection, students' behaviour and attendance continue to improve. Staff have not had to use physical intervention or restraint during this academic year. The number of exclusions and the number of days students were absent from school due to exclusion have reduced significantly. For example, in the autumn term 2014, students were absent from school for 120 days due to exclusion. In the summer term 2015, this figure is eight days. Telford College of Arts and Technology staff told the inspector that the atmosphere in the Kickstart centre and around the college is much calmer and that the majority of students now behave appropriately. However, a few Kickstart staff do not agree that students' behaviour is good. They believe that this is due to some staff not consistently applying the school's behaviour policy. The majority of staff who completed the school's own questionnaire said that too many students use foul and abusive language in and around the school and smoke cigarettes during the school day.

Students' overall attendance, while improving, is still too low. The school has further reduced the number of students on part-time modified timetables and this number is now appropriate. The school, in collaboration with the education welfare officer, has implemented a range of strategies to tackle students' absence. These strategies have had the greatest impact on students in Year 10. As a result, the attendance of students in Year 10, at 68%, is just below the school's attendance target. School leaders recognise the need to maintain high expectations for attendance with Year 10 and to quickly establish good attendance and timekeeping habits with students joining the school next academic year.

Students say they continue to feel safe in the school and know how to resist the temptation to be antisocial or unlawful. Almost all staff agree that students are safe and that incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

School leaders, the management committee and the local authority have sustained the momentum of change and are tackling effectively the areas for improvement identified at the inspection in November 2013. However, the school needs more time to ensure actions and changes result in sustained and significant improvements in students' achievement, behaviour and attendance.

An increased proportion of staff believe the school is well led and managed and that policies are applied consistently. A large number of teachers and teaching assistants told the inspector that staff morale is high and that there is a tangible sense of purpose, team work and collaboration to ensure students achieve success.

The curriculum for next year, 2015-16, has been modified and Year 10 students are excited by the opportunities to study a wide range of subjects at Telford College of Arts and Technology.

The school has worked effectively to improve communications with parents and to engage them in the learning of their children. As a result, a large number of parents attended the recent Year 11 leaving and celebration assembly. Parents are also helped to connect with the school through frequent student review meetings. These are generally well attended.

School leaders are aware of the need to monitor, evaluate and review all aspects of the school's work frequently, accurately and thoroughly. However, school leaders are not yet using the results of their evaluations routinely to inform action plans that guide further improvements.

Minutes of the management committee meetings show that members are questioning the achievement, attendance and behaviour of students. However,

members have not checked to make sure that all statutory policies are in place, up-to-date and monitored.

The school's conversion to academy status is being well managed by school leaders and the management committee. There will be no change to the leadership structure or to the admissions policy. The process of appointing additional staff to the academy has begun. For example, the academy is appointing a pastoral support worker to allow the current deputy headteacher to focus more closely on the academy's monitoring and review procedures. The academy management committee will have a new chair and structure. The vast majority of appointments to these posts have been made.

### **External support**

The local authority has secured improvements in the information the school receives from excluding schools. As a result, the school is able to plan intervention and support earlier and more effectively. The local authority provides effective support for teachers and school leaders through financial services support, a learning and teaching advisor, and a representative of the local authority sitting on the school's management committee. As a result, teaching has improved and the management committee has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The local authority has supported the school as it prepares to convert to academy status and has ensured that school leaders and teachers continue to focus on improving the outcomes for students. The local authority will be represented on the academy management committee.