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11 October 2013

Mr Stephen Capper  
Interim Headteacher  
Futures Community College  
Southchurch Boulevard  
Southend-on-Sea  
SS2 4UY

Dear Mr Capper

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Futures Community College**

Following my visit to your school on 10 October 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to serious weaknesses following the inspection which took place in November 2012. 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 serious weaknesses.

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

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next 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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Southend-on-Sea.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2012**

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching to make sure that:
  - work is demanding and well matched to the capabilities of all students
  - students have opportunities to work by themselves
  - teachers deal well with occasional minor disruptions by students
  - classroom assistants always know how they can best help students with their learning.
  
- Raise standards and improve how well students make progress, by:
  - providing opportunities in all subjects for students to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills through answering questions, discussing their work with each other and explaining their understanding in speech and writing
  - improving the standard of students' handwriting
  - making sure students know precisely how well they are doing, how they can improve their work and how they can make rapid progress
  - providing academic choices in all subjects, including in the sixth form.
  
- Improve how well subject leaders:
  - check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects
  - provide training and support for their colleagues to help drive up the standards of students' work.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 October 2013**

### **Evidence**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and senior leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A brief visit to seven classrooms, as part of a learning walk with senior leaders, provided the opportunity to observe students' learning.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, two assistant headteachers and a director of finances have joined the senior leadership team. The head of English has left the school. The head of science has relinquished her leadership duties but remains in school as a teacher of science.

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

- Senior leaders, teachers and support staff have been unable to raise standards and improve how well students make progress. Overall, results achieved in 2013 were lower than the previous years and remained well below the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Attainment in science and in English was particularly low. In mathematics, the proportion of students that made the progress they should was much lower than that found nationally. Previous poor management of examination entries led to no Year 11 students achieving an A\* to C grade in some foundation subjects.
- The school's own evaluation has rightly raised concerns about students' underachievement in English and in science. It has not thoroughly evaluated why some of its most vulnerable students, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieved significantly less well than others.

### **The quality of teaching**

- Observations of lessons confirmed that currently, the overall quality of teaching is not good enough to accelerate the progress of all students and make up for the shortfalls in their knowledge and understanding.

- Many of the common weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection remain. Very little learning is matched to students' different abilities, so tasks are often too easy and fail to stimulate their interest. Some teachers talk for too long, which limits the time for students to learn independently. Teaching assistants are not deployed well enough to help students with their learning. The poor punctuality and casual attitudes of a minority of students, especially boys, are not tackled effectively.
- Students are learning together in small groups more often and this is encouraging them to share their ideas, discuss their work and listen to the views of others. However, teachers are not regularly checking that all boys are engaging fully and doing their fair share of the work.
- Students have target grades recorded in their books in some subjects but, when asked, not all of them knew their targets or could explain what they needed to do to achieve them. Some teachers mark students' work in detail but others do not mark it at all.

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

- Students in all key stages now use both of the school sites and are responding positively by behaving appropriately and respecting their new surroundings. In lessons, very little disruptive behaviour was seen. However, the school's own data shows that, so far this term, over 100 students have been removed from lessons and 25 have been excluded from school.
- Overall attendance remains low. It is showing some improvement this term but not across all age groups.

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

- Senior leaders and governors are not demonstrating the capacity to secure rapid improvement. New procedures to improve teaching, behaviour and manage the performance of staff have been introduced, and detailed plans for improvement are in place, but these are not leading to higher standards. Leaders and managers, governors and staff are not showing sufficient drive, ambition and aspiration to improve the outcomes for students.
- Senior leaders, including governors, feel that the majority of teaching is good or better, but they are unable to explain why this is not leading to higher achievement. The findings from lesson observations are not being analysed alongside regular reviews of progress data, scrutiny of work and interviews with students to gauge the full impact of teaching over time.

- Subject leaders are not doing enough to raise achievement. The school is unable to show the impact they are having on checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects or in helping their colleagues to improve.
- The response to the recommendation made in the last monitoring report for an external review of governance has been too slow. Some progress has been made in rationalising governance into a single executive board, but this is not improving the school's performance. Governors do not receive enough high-quality information on all aspects of the school's performance to fully challenge senior leaders.

### **External support**

The local authority has amended its statement of action but it is still not fit for purpose because it is having little impact on improving the school. Actions are more appropriate but they are not being monitored closely enough or evaluated thoroughly to increase the school's effectiveness.