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11 June 2014

Mrs Jen McIntosh  
Headteacher  
Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College  
Thornbury Road  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD3 8HE

Dear Mrs McIntosh

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College, Bradford**

Following my visit to your college on 10 June 2014 with Bernard Campbell HMI, 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.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, members of your senior leadership team, a group of staff, members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority. We met with a number of students and had telephone discussions with a few parents and carers. We visited a range of lessons, some with senior leaders, and looked at examples of students' work in books. We also considered a few letters received from students, parents and carers, and a member of the community.

This monitoring inspection focused on the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the curriculum.

## **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection two temporary senior leadership and teaching positions have been made permanent. A long-standing staff absence issue has been resolved. A review of the college's middle leadership has been completed and this is enabling you to move forward with restructuring this tier of leadership. A new leader for modern languages and two science teachers, one in the role of second-in-department, joined the college after Easter. Two further faculty leaders have been appointed and will take up their posts in September 2014.

Eleven teachers, some on temporary contracts, will leave the college at the end of the summer term. Two teachers on temporary contracts have been made permanent and three have had their temporary contracts extended. Six teaching posts have been advertised and interviews are scheduled for later this week. Seven teachers are currently absent due to ill health.

The IEB was appointed very shortly after the last monitoring inspection and meets regularly.

## **Main findings**

The overall quality of teaching in the college is steadily improving. This is a result of effective staff training, coaching for individual teachers, new appointments to the college, and the robust tackling of underperformance. Senior leaders are using a wider range of evidence to develop a more accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher. This is enabling them to tailor actions to a teacher's individual areas for development more effectively.

Leaders have further reduced but not eradicated inadequate teaching. In an observed lesson that was well planned the teaching provided precise guidance and accurate verbal feedback on what students should do to successfully write a diary about the Black Death. As a result, students wrote enthusiastically and read out loud expressively. In an engaging music lesson students concentrated well on learning to play an Indian raga. In a science lesson, students worked well collaboratively to make links between different aspects of a topic, discussing and developing their understanding effectively. In other observed lessons there were limited opportunities to engage students in structured talk and to use questions in whole class dialogue with the result that students worked more slowly and with less direction.

Higher expectations of students' achievement and improvements in the quality of teaching are being driven by more rigorous accountability in the setting and reviewing of teachers' targets, managing performance and in decisions about pay. Staff who spoke with inspectors said that increased opportunities to share good practice and more coaching by teachers, within and across subjects, were helping to promote improvement. Those interviewed gave specific examples of aspects of their teaching that had improved. Staff believe correctly that the college has been in a

state of rapid transition and they look forward to greater stability of staffing in the next school year. Newer senior leaders are becoming more established in their roles and have begun to have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the organisation of the curriculum. Many middle leaders are new to their roles. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in a number of subjects, including science. In other subjects, where leaders have taken new responsibilities more recently or are still to take up post, there is less impact or consistency.

The extent of staff absence and the reliance on supply teachers in several subjects understandably remain a major concern for the students and parents and carers who made contact with us. Reducing staff absence has been a key leadership priority and a range of strategies to minimise the impact of unstable staffing have been used to support this work. Inspection evidence suggests that the situation is gradually improving with the appointment of new teachers and the return of staff who have been absent long term. Nevertheless, you and your senior team remain acutely aware of the negative impact this is having on students' achievement in a few subjects, including in the sixth form.

You recognise that you have not made enough progress in improving achievement in the sixth form. Staff absence has affected students' progress in biology, English, psychology and health and social care with many students choosing not to continue to study these subjects in the college. As a result, the number of students on roll in the sixth form has fallen considerably. Some of the sixth form students who spoke with us were dissatisfied with their access to information, advice and guidance.

Changes to the curriculum have improved the quality of courses in modern languages, physical education, design and technology, humanities and the arts at Key Stage 3 and 4. For example, the introduction of a range of physical education qualifications at Key Stage 4 has proved popular with students and improved the motivation and engagement of those lower down the school.

Your decision to move tutor time from the start of each day to part-way through the morning has successfully brought about a marked improvement in punctuality, particularly in Years 7 and 9. Tutor time is also being used more effectively in both Key Stage 3 and 4 to provide additional teaching to accelerate students' progress. External partnerships are extending opportunities for students to gain wider experience and ensure they are better prepared for life in Britain and their future education and employment beyond the college.

Members of the IEB have brought useful expertise to the college and they are well-placed to monitor the college's progress and develop links with the wider community. Each IEB member has taken responsibility for the college's performance in relation one key inspection judgement. They have worked closely with you and members of your senior team to develop an accurate view of the college's strengths and areas for development. Recent decisions by the IEB have enabled you to move

forward with finalising the senior leadership team structure, completing a review of subject leadership within the college and to recruit to vacant posts.

Ofsted will carry out a further monitoring visit and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the college until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to monitor the college's progress closely and provide support for you and your leadership team. A recent review of the sixth form, carried out by the local authority, provides a helpful evaluation linked to useful recommendations to bring about the improvements that are urgently required.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**