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26 June 2014

Stuart Reynolds
Headteacher
Futures Community College
Southchurch Boulevard
Southend-on-Sea
SS2 4UY

Dear Mr Reynolds

Special measures monitoring inspection of Futures Community College

Following my visit to your school on 25 June 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, your senior leaders, students, the executive headteacher, Chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

You were appointed as the interim headteacher in November 2013 and became the substantive headteacher in April 2014. Two new deputy headteachers also joined the senior leadership team in April 2014, and an assistant headteacher has been appointed to join at the start of the new academic year. The director of finance, who was appointed on a temporary basis in September 2013, is now permanent.

The head of English joined the school in May 2014. The heads of mathematics and science are scheduled to take up their appointments in September 2014. By the end of this term, 10 teaching staff are expected to have left. You have successfully replaced most of these staff and are currently recruiting for business studies and textiles teachers.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Your appointment as headteacher has provided stability for the school. You are establishing a team that has high expectations for students and staff and are focused on school improvement. You and your senior leaders are providing much-needed direction to the school. You have taken decisive action to make sure the right people are in the right roles. At the time of the last inspection, many lessons were taught by temporary teachers; currently, many more lessons are taught by permanent staff.

You have rightly focused on establishing systems that are understood and followed by teachers and students alike. These systems include the new behaviour policy. Students understand it and report that punctuality and behaviour have improved but attendance is not yet good enough. You are gathering information on individual students but are not yet using this to analyse achievement of different groups of students.

You have established a system of regular meetings with senior leaders to review progress. The deputy headteacher has analysed the performance of each department and set targets for development. This action is intended to provide clarity and direction, particularly for inexperienced subject leaders. Subject leaders are receiving training so that they are better able to meet your expectations of their role and you have established weekly meetings for them with senior leaders to evaluate developments. These processes are important stages in beginning to hold staff to account for the progress students make.

Until now, teachers have not had accurate information on students' achievement. You have revised the system to record data on students' attainment and progress, and all students are currently undergoing assessment in order to give you accurate information on current standards. You plan to use this information to raise aspirations by setting targets for students and teachers and holding them to account for the progress made. This is an important step in order to raise standards.

The Interim Executive Board has experienced members. They have supported you in staff recruitment and are regularly involved in activities, such as the attendance and behaviour panels. This work gives them a clearer view of what is happening in the

school. Records of recent meetings show that members are asking challenging questions and demanding better-quality information from you in order to assess the impact of your work on teaching and achievement. However, they have not received information from you about the difference additional funding for the pupil premium is making to eligible pupils' achievement.

In the coming academic year, the school is intending to provide only a hair-and-beauty course in the sixth form, with English and mathematics for students who have not achieved GCSE grades A* to C in these subjects. This provision is intended to give you time to consider what the sixth form should offer in the longer term.

The school action plan, properly devised in consultation with students, staff and governors, addresses the key areas for improvement and identifies actions the school is intending to take. However, the plan does not record what the current situation is, and does not state interim criteria to enable you to measure frequently enough if the school is on track to meet the targets set.

The local authority is providing appropriate support. This includes helping senior leaders to check the quality of teaching, training for middle leaders and financial support to manage the budget. Nevertheless, the local authority's statement of action lacks clarity about what support it is to provide, when it will provide it and what the interim criteria are to enable it to know it is making a difference.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

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

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Southend-on-Sea and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector