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Will Scott
Sir John Gleed School
Neville Avenue
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Dear Mr Scott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sir John Gleed School

Following my visit to your academy on 10 July 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 academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, and the academy trust adviser. Meetings were also held with the director of the academy's sponsor, the CfBT Schools Trust (CST). The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated. A range of documentation, including the most recent reports to the governing body and governing body minutes, were scrutinised, along with recent external reviews of safeguarding, special educational needs provision, teaching and behaviour. The vetting checks on new staff were also examined, together with the academy's arrangements for safeguarding. Brief visits were made to a sample of classes to look at the impact of actions taken since the previous inspection. Tours were made of corridors at lesson changes and the outside areas at lunchtime, when informal discussions with a wide range of students took place.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body have resigned. An interim headteacher was appointed, who was previously the

deputy headteacher of the academy. A new Chair of the Governing Body has also been appointed. A small number of staff, including four senior leaders, will be leaving the academy at the end of August 2013. An associate headteacher from a neighbouring successful academy has been employed to provide additional support. The appointment of a permanent headteacher is expected to be made in the spring term.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The academy sponsors, governing body and senior leaders are determined to bring about rapid school improvement. The acting headteacher has quickly taken on the leadership of the academy, with support from the associate headteacher and the senior team. Together they have set out a clear vision and are beginning to drive change. For example, behaviour has already improved as a result of a review of the behaviour policy, shared and clearly understood expectations and a more consistent approach to the use of sanctions and rewards. However, improvements to the teaching and the learning are less evident, and are being held back by inherent weaknesses in planning for good progress in lessons.

The academy improvement action plan, written after the inspection of April 2013, is accurately targeted on the areas for improvement. The plan is detailed and focuses on increasing students' achievement through raising the quality of teaching, and strengthening leadership and its impact on teaching and students' progress. Roles and responsibilities, resources and intended outcomes are identified, although some measures of success would benefit from greater detail. Timeframes are realistic and clearly defined, with milestones along the way. There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for each of the key areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. The roles of the governing body and senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating progress are explicit. The plan is flexible and acknowledges that amendments may be made in December 2013 following the review of leadership and the progress made in addressing the required actions during the autumn term.

The sponsor's statement of action sets out a wide range of planned support for the short and longer term. It was written in tandem with the academy improvement plan; consequently, there is close alignment between the two. Parents and carers were invited to attend year-group meetings in June to raise questions about the inspection report and to hear about the academy's recent and planned action to bring about improvement. Progress in implementing the action plan is recorded on the academy's website for parents to see and is also communicated through a termly newsletter. A new parents' forum is providing regular opportunities to discuss the impact of the school's actions and explore ways that parents can support the school.

The sponsor recognises that the current leadership arrangements are temporary and may therefore be fragile, and has strengthened these with additional support at governor and headteacher levels. In all cases, the focus of this support is to build capacity within the academy itself to become self-sufficient and to drive the improvements that are needed.

A leadership review has been undertaken by CST advisers and a new leadership structure has been established. A comprehensive review of governance is planned for the autumn term, when members of the governing body will audit their skills and knowledge to ensure that they access appropriate training. Strong governance is being effectively modelled by the new Chair of the Governing Body. He is providing a very good steer for further improvement.

Immediately following the inspection in April, a CST safeguarding specialist carried out an audit of academy policy and practice. Any concerns have been addressed.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The academy sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose. The following minor refinements are recommended in order to measure the impact of the planned actions more systematically:

- sharpen the measure of progress, to be based on most students gaining more than two National Curriculum sub-levels each year
- sharpen the measure of students' attitudes to learning in classes and of their behaviour around the academy.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint a maximum of two newly qualified teachers, restricted to the following departments: art and construction. These appointments can only be made if appropriate mentoring and strong professional support can be assured.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the DfE Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector