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4 June 2014

Mr Colin Short
Headteacher
Reddish Vale Technology College
Reddish Vale Road
Stockport
Cheshire
SK5 7HD

Dear Mr Short

Special measures monitoring inspection of Reddish Vale Technology College

Following my visit to your school on 3 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 academy's recent section 5 inspection.

This visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice chair, and a representative of the local authority. The proprietor's statement of action and the academy's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

The academy constituted a new governing body on 25 March 2014. Since the last inspection, a local authority safeguarding officer and anti-bullying coordinator has been seconded to the senior leadership team.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders and managers agree that the issues identified in the report were appropriate; that there is a pressing need to raise expectations of what all groups of students are able to achieve and to ensure that students are safe and secure in the academy. To this end, leaders and managers are taking urgent and decisive action. The newly constituted governing body comprises members who are highly experienced in school improvement and safeguarding. They have a clear idea of what the academy needs to do to move forward and are able to both support and challenge the work of senior and middle leaders. The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the academy that has been shared with, and welcomed by, staff. They are committed to making rapid improvements and have made a strong start to implementing the improvement agenda.

The statement of action has been developed with contributions from a broad range of staff, including non-teaching staff and governors. It systematically addresses the areas for improvement highlighted in the inspection report and identifies clear actions. Some actions, such as the urgent need to improve governance, have already been met with support from a national lead for governance, and the roles within the senior leadership team have been re-distributed to include, for example, the appointment of an assistant headteacher with the responsibility to oversee behaviour and safety.

Action planning includes the funding of support from local outstanding schools and other external consultants, and a re-engagement with the support that the local authority can offer. The local authority has already undertaken a review of the science department and a review of safeguarding, which has led to the production of revised action plans. The local authority is also offering access to its leadership development programmes and leadership networks. Leaders have already undertaken a range of training and monitoring activities that are being used to help teachers understand how to improve their practice. The improvement plan includes clear and appropriate actions. However, success criteria need to be more specific, monitoring more focused on how outcomes will be measured and resource implications need to be more clearly identified.

The academy's three-year improvement plan was written prior to the inspection and does not address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. It has been superseded by the statement of action which is functioning as an improvement plan.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The proprietor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The academy's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Stockport and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector