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Mr Adrian Kneeshaw
Headteacher
Carlton Bolling College
Undercliffe Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD3 0DU

Dear Mr Kneeshaw

Special measures monitoring inspection of Carlton Bolling College

Following my visit to your school on 17 October 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 June 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, two members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the local authority's senior area achievement officer. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. Minutes of the most recent meeting of the IEB were reviewed, as were a range of other documents including the IEB's action plan, the note of visit following the recent Bradford Partnership Autumn Review and the school's child protection and safeguarding policy. I toured the school and visited a number of faculties including English, mathematics, humanities, design technology and art.

Context

Since the inspection, there have been no changes in senior leaders. At the end of the summer term, 22 teaching staff left the school and at the start of this term 13

teachers joined the staff. The governing body has been replaced by an IEB. This body began its work with five members. However, one member has had to withdraw for personal reasons. A replacement has been found and additional members are being sought. The IEB and senior leaders are beginning to explore academy status.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders, members of the IEB and the local authority are clear in their resolve to introduce the necessary changes to bring about timely and sustained improvement. The plans for the school to be removed from the category of special measures are extremely ambitious. As such, they require an immense amount of work in a relatively short space of time. To assist this process, it would be helpful for senior leaders to map the full sequence of actions and associated completion dates of all the areas for improvement, as noted in the statement of action and the improvement plan, so that unmanageable pressure points can be avoided.

The statement of action prioritises the activities to bring about improvement in governance, persistent absence, safeguarding, the curriculum and newly qualified teachers. It also notes the support being allocated to bring about improvement along with appropriate costings. It does not cover all the points of each area for improvement. However, it is the intention of the School Specific Monitoring Group (SSMG) to cover each of these areas for improvement in its monthly meetings. This aspect of monitoring is not clear in the current version of the statement of action. The SSMG has met once and concluded, among other things, that the school's action plan is not fit for purpose. It has asked the headteacher to submit a revised plan at its next meeting.

The school improvement plan sets out the actions to be taken to tackle most of the areas for improvement and the people who will lead on these actions. The overall timescales for the completion of the actions are noted, as are the monitoring activities and the final expectations. However, the plan does have a number of weaknesses. It does not identify any milestones linked to clear quantifiable evaluation criteria against which success or otherwise and the impact of actions taken can be measured. There is insufficient reference to ongoing progress within the monitoring procedures. As a result, monitoring focuses on checking the completion of actions rather than the impact of those actions. Individuals responsible for monitoring and evaluation and thus responsible for reporting to the IEB and the SSMG are not given. These groups are due to meet monthly but it is not clear what level of success or impact is expected because none is noted at present in the school's improvement plan.

The school has informed parents of the Ofsted inspection findings and has plans to communicate future developments with them. It also plans to commission a survey

of parental views. However, the planned contact between the school and parents is not extensive enough to ensure that the school is informed on a regular basis of the views of these important groups.

The school improvement plan refers to 'all staff' being 'involved in weekly quality Inset'. It is clear that the additional training to bring about improvement has been integrated into the whole-school professional development programme. However, the evaluation of such plans needs to be much sharper to help ensure that the school makes the rapid and sustained improvement which is required.

Members of the IEB are committed to helping the school to improve quickly. They are keen to address the issues raised by the inspection and they are knowledgeable and insightful. They have met once and are focused upon ensuring that all action plans are detailed, cross referenced to the Ofsted report, cover all aspects of the areas for improvement and have quantifiable outcomes and clear success criteria. The IEB has started to draft its own action plan but recognises the value of having one single plan covering the work of the school and the IEB to bring about improvement. The IEB is a small group and its capacity to undertake the significant tasks placed upon it is not yet clear. With the removal of the governing body and its replacement by an IEB, a review of governance has not yet taken place. However, future monitoring inspections will focus upon the impact of the IEB and may well recommend that a review takes place at some future point.

All staff and members of the IEB have had appropriate safeguarding training. At the last inspection the school was criticised because its policy failed 'to give necessary attention to potential risks posed by extremism'. The report noted that the policy did 'not identify the steps the college will take to protect students from the possible risks of radicalisation or extremism'. The current policy, ratified by the former governing body in July 2014, has not rectified this situation. As a result, the criticism from the section 5 inspection in June 2014 is still valid. This is unacceptable. Senior leaders are aware of this and a revised child protection and safeguarding policy, containing appropriate references to focusing upon the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation, is being prepared for ratification by the IEB at its October meeting.

The last inspection report recommended that the school arrange for an external review of the use of the pupil premium funding (additional government money) in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. However, there has been little substantive progress on commissioning a review of the school's use of the pupil premium. This is also unacceptable. In addition, the latest pupil premium spending report focuses on how money was spent and makes reference to students' outcomes in 2013. However, there is no link between actions and outcomes. As a result, the impact of the expenditure is not known and it is not clear how effectively the money has been spent.

A coordinated approach to the assessment of progress in dealing with the areas for improvement is not yet in place. An initial progress check on teaching and learning has been undertaken. It includes substantial detail as to actions taken. However, there is insufficient focus on the impact of those actions. The absence of monitoring milestones in the school improvement plan means that an overall review of progress has not yet been undertaken. As a result, senior leaders and governors are not clear as to the impact of actions taken so far.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. This statement of action would benefit considerably from:

- clarifying the precise role of the SSMG and the approach it will take in monitoring the impact of actions taken by the school to address all the areas for improvement.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose. This must be amended to:

- identify within each section the milestones and the linked quantifiable evaluation criteria against which progress can be measured
- ensure that monitoring procedures and final expectations focus on the impact of actions and on progress made to meeting set targets
- make sure that the timescales for all actions do not create unmanageable pressure points
- identify clearly the individuals responsible for monitoring and evaluation and thus responsible for reporting to the IEB and the SSMG
- ensure that the school establishes procedures to gather regularly the views of parents and carers
- ensure that all plans for professional staff training are evaluated according to clear procedures which focus on the impact of that training.

As a matter of urgency, governors and senior leaders must draw up and ratify a more appropriate child protection and safeguarding policy, complete the review of the pupil premium and implement the recommendations made.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection but only with my prior approval.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Strategic Director Children's Services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Maddison
Her Majesty's Inspector