

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment
Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524 **Direct T** 01695 566932
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 01695 729320
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct email:** hcarnall@cfbt.com

14 January 2015

Mr Trevor Dunn
Acting Headteacher
Fyndoune Community College
Findon Hill
Sacriston
Durham
DH7 6LU

Dear Mr Dunn

Special measures monitoring inspection of Fyndoune Community College

Following my visit to your college on 13 January 2015, 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 college's recent section 5 inspection.

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

Evidence

During this inspection meetings were held with the acting headteacher and the head of college, the acting Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, the National Leader of Education (NLE) supporting the college and representatives of the local authority. During a tour of the college, an assembly was observed and brief visits were made to several classrooms to look at pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. The local authority's statement of action and the college's action plan were evaluated.

Context

Fyndoune Community College is part of a federation with a local secondary school with which it shares a single governing body. The chief executive of the college is currently not in school. An acting headteacher has oversight of the two colleges with a head of college taking responsibility for the day-to-day work of each. The Chair of the Governing Body at the time of the section 5 inspection has resigned and an established member of the governing body has taken on the role of acting Chair. The local authority has appointed two NLGs as additional governors and has

established a college scrutiny group to monitor the progress of the college against its action plan. The local authority is in the process of applying for the governing body to be replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB). A NLE has been appointed to support leadership within the college. Plans for the college to become an academy are under consideration.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The acting headteacher, with extensive support from the local authority and a NLE, has responded quickly to the inspection findings and is taking effective action to address the points for improvement identified in the inspection report. The college improvement plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement identified, includes milestones to be achieved each term and is linked to targets for improvements in leadership, the quality of teaching, students' behaviour and achievement.

The local authority's statement of action is appropriately detailed and incorporates challenging but achievable success criteria. Substantial resources are being provided to improve the college, both in terms of additional personnel and additional funding. A school scrutiny group, including representatives of the local authority, college governors and the NLEs attached to each college, meets regularly to support and challenge the college's senior leaders. Detailed minutes produced by the group indicate that college senior leaders are now being held to account for their work.

A more rigorous system for collecting and analysing data about students' progress is now in place and current college information indicates that achievement is rising. This will be verified when the current Year 11 mock examinations are marked in partnership with staff from supporting schools. The local authority, in partnership with staff from St John's School and Sixth Form College, a local outstanding school, are currently carrying out a detailed review of each subject department in the college and from this work individual department improvement plans will be created.

There has been a much stronger focus on training and the professional development of teachers since the inspection. Three teachers from the college are currently attending the Improving Teacher Programme and six other staff are undertaking the Outstanding Teacher Programme organised by the Durham Teaching School Alliance. Current priorities are focused on the use of assessment data to inform lesson planning, increasing challenge and improving engagement in lessons, and managing students' behaviour.

The local authority has applied to the Department for Education to appoint an IEB so the external review of governance has not yet taken place. However, some actions to strengthen the impact of governance have occurred. A new acting Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed and two NLGs have joined the governing body to support improvement work and add further challenge to the college leadership. Some governors are accessing further training or mentoring. However, there are still

significant gaps in governors' ability to monitor the actions of the college's senior and middle leadership. Expectations of how senior and middle leaders work across the two colleges need to be urgently addressed.

During my tour of the college, students were engaging with their learning and complying with teachers' expectations of behaviour. The college was calm and orderly and no incidents of disruptive behaviour were observed during this monitoring inspection.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The college is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The college's action plan is fit for purpose.

The college 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 Governing Body and the Corporate Director: Children's and Adults' Services for Durham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector