

Tribal  
Kings Orchard  
One Queen Street  
Bristol  
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com



23 January 2015

Mrs Jane Hadlow  
Interim Principal  
Castle Community College  
Mill Road  
Deal  
CT14 9BD

Dear Mrs Hadlow

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Castle Community College**

Following my visit with Dr Michael Sutherland-Harper, Susan Thomas-Pounce and Jennese Alozie, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 21 and 22 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

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

Having considered all the evidence, I recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Kent and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014**

- Significantly improve the quality of teaching across all subjects by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have higher expectations of what students can achieve
  - regularly set work that challenges and extends the students' skills, especially their skills in writing
  - apply the college's policy on marking.
- Raise the achievement of all groups, especially boys, the most-able students and those supported by additional funding, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
  - consistently providing students with work that meets their needs and challenge their knowledge and understanding
  - refusing to accept work that is poorly presented and is clearly below the students' ability levels
  - ensuring work is properly marked and that the students are given precise written feedback on what has been done well, what could be improved and how.
- Significantly improve behaviour, especially at the Mill Road site, in lessons and around the building to ensure that boisterous behavior in corridors is eliminated and that classroom learning is not disturbed by the poor conduct of a significant minority of students. Ensure that all staff apply the college's policy on behaviour management.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - rigorously checking the progress of all student groups by ensuring that the available performance data are accurate and fit for purpose and can be readily used by teachers to help with their planning for learning
  - improving the process by which the quality of teaching and learning is monitored
  - ensuring that the curriculum provided adequately meets the needs of all students, especially the more able
  - ensuring that governors are more effective in holding senior staff to account for the college's performance.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the college's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken to assess how this area of leadership can be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 21 and 22 January 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work on both the Mill Road and Salisbury Road sites, scrutinised a wide range of documents and met with the Principal, other leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with parents informally during a scheduled consultation afternoon. The lead inspector met two parents personally at their request.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, The SchoolsCompany Trust has been appointed formally as the sponsor for the academy. The governing body has begun to work with a smaller structure. The governing body has appointed a professional clerk. A staff governor and a parent governor were elected to the governing body. One member of staff left the school at Christmas and three new teachers joined.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Students' achievement is beginning to improve. This has been caused by leaders insisting that students raise expectations of themselves. The new leadership team has been relentless in asking teachers to be ambitious for each of their students. This is necessary. Published examination results from the summer 2014 were disappointing. They were the first set of results for the newly constituted Castle Community College which came into being in September 2013. The examination results were, however, better than for the two predecessor schools in 2013 and recent checks show that performance continues to recover. Based on reliable tests and examinations, current results in all years are broadly better than for the same period last year. The rigorous testing regime is based on sensible practice in, for example, mathematics and science. In both subjects, teachers have rightly undertaken an analysis of what each student knows matched against the examination requirements. In a Year 11 chemistry lesson, the teacher was going back over work on electrolysis because many students showed they needed more learning on this topic. In a Year 7 mathematics class, a teacher was carefully checking how students completed long multiplication sums. When the teacher was sure that all students were secure with this skill she moved on to teach students how to multiply decimal numbers.

In lessons like these, achievement was stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. Students are making faster progress because there are much better structures for their learning. Progress remains slow where lessons lack this level of structure or fail to take into account what students know already and are able to do. More able students generally make slower progress because teaching does not always stretch them. A male student said, 'I would like harder work.' Not enough

work has been done since the inspection to ensure that this group of students is appropriately challenged.

Disabled students and those with special educational needs benefit from a well-organised, well-informed and increasingly professional team. Their progress is tracked individually and teaching is arranged to support their progress. Learning support is carefully planned and provided. This large group of students consequently makes reasonable progress and the gaps between them and their classmates are generally closing. Leaders are beginning to apply the same rigour to the work undertaken to improve the achievement of those supported by additional funding. However, progress remains inconsistent for this group, as it is for boys across the academy.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved in many subjects. In performing arts, for example, inspectors observed students taking responsibility for their own learning. This resulted in some brilliant performances, including the creation of impressive human sculptures. In mathematics in Year 12 and Year 7, teachers were observed asking students to complete sums at the start of lessons so that they could judge the level of students' knowledge and skills. As a result, they were able to adjust their plans to help each learner make good progress. There remains, however, a significant proportion of teaching which is inadequate. A minority of teachers are still not making good use of time in lessons, setting work which is hard enough for the most able students or providing good enough resources to support each student's learning. As a result, students' progress is inconsistent.

The new leadership team has been clear about what it expects. The members expect all teachers to use information about students' performance so that lessons are planned according to students' needs. Teachers are expected to mark work in accordance with the assessment policy. This includes providing students with helpful comments on how to improve their work. Not all teachers are following this policy yet. Some still only provide ticks or comments such as 'good work'. A few teachers, especially in science, write lengthy comments on students' work, but even these are not focused enough on what the student needs to do to make the work better. In design and technology, a colourful work booklet, well designed and presented, provides helpful guidance for students. It does not provide guidance, though, on what to do to improve the depth of their answers. Across the academy, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to write at length and practise the skills they learn increasingly well in English.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The conduct of students in lessons has improved. Inspectors saw very little low level disruption or bad behaviour. A wide range of effective strategies has been put in place to help manage behaviour, such as an inclusion centre for those at risk of exclusion. Specialist staff in the behaviour team and the progress leaders, check

students' behaviour daily. They challenge appropriately anything that falls short of expectations. There are academy-wide routines for the start and end of lessons. Inspectors did not always see them used consistently.

Senior leaders have extended the academy's information management system so that it provides immediate information about absence and incidents. Students now know that their behaviour, good and bad, will be recorded and followed up. Students say that, in the last six months, behaviour has improved markedly. The large majority of parents agree. The number of fixed term exclusions has halved in the past year. Attendance is improving slowly but is still below the national average.

Work to keep students safe remains a strength of the academy. Students have received training on keeping themselves safe online and are very clear about what bullying is and what to do if it occurs. Students said it occurs less frequently than in the past.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The interim principal is tireless in her determination to improve the school. She is ambitious for the students and accepts that there is still much to be done to ensure that they receive the education they deserve. She is ably supported by an increasingly effective leadership team. The majority of senior leaders are new to their roles but are willing and keen to perform well. Senior leaders have already had significant impact on students' conduct, which is now mainly good, and students' attitudes to learning are improving. Leadership has also had a positive impact on the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs.

The interim principal is focusing now on improving classroom practice. She has implemented a robust system of performance management and regular checking of the quality of teaching and learning. She has a very detailed and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. Senior leaders share this work and support it by providing regular and specific training to teachers on aspects of teaching that still need to improve. Not all teachers take up these opportunities.

The majority of middle leaders are supporting the interim principal's drive for improvement. The leadership of science is secure and the overall leadership of mathematics is effective. The current subject leader of mathematics has other work to do which reduces the amount of time available for specific work in the department. A newly appointed head of English is in place. This has strengthened the leadership of that subject.

Leadership of the sixth form is increasingly strong. The progress leader is able to account accurately for the current performance of students. Students are placed now on programmes of study that build on their previous learning and are helping them work towards appropriate qualifications. Students say they are provided with good

quality information, advice and guidance. Students are rightly being provided with opportunities to improve their English and mathematics results.

### **External support**

The academy has been supported extensively by a range of School Improvement Partners from SchoolsCompany Ltd, the LA and a range of independent subject advisers. The local authority has supported the school in checking leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching, student progress and achievements, and to improve the quality of information available to teachers about students' achievements. There is clarity now about what students know, understand and can do in every subject. Subject and behaviour experts provide training on a range of teaching and learning issues. As a result of this work, there have been marked improvements in the effectiveness of many lessons and a reduction in the number of behavioural incidents.