

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 6799167
Direct email: farhan.aslam@serco.com

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Stephen Wall
Sutherland Co-operative Academy
Gibbons Road
Trench
Telford
TF2 7JR

Dear Mr Wall

Special measures monitoring inspection of Sutherland Co-operative Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 19 May 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 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 February 2015.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, two deputy headteachers, a group of middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a new member of the board of the Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Community Academies Trust. I walked around the academy and visited a number of lessons. The academy's improvement plan was evaluated; no statement of action was provided by the Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust.

Context

Since the last inspection, the academy has undergone significant contextual changes and these changes remain ongoing. Sutherland Co-operative Academy is one of four

academies in the Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust; this trust is not continuing as the sponsor of these academies. All staff and parents have been informed that the academy will close on 3 July and a new academy, in purpose-built premises funded by 'Building Schools for the Future', will open in September 2015. The new academy will be the result of a merger between Sutherland Co-operative Academy and Wrockwardine Wood Arts Academy. The preferred new sponsor is the Community Academies Trust. The Chief Executive Officer of this trust is currently undertaking a staffing restructure across all four of the academies in the Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust. The current Principal will leave his post in August 2015. The deputy headteacher of Sutherland Co-operative Academy has been appointed to be Head of School in the new academy. The governing body is to be suspended in June 2015 and an education advisory board will be in place, formed by the Community Academies Trust.

During the visit, a number of teachers and support staff were being interviewed for positions in the new academy, as part of the restructure.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders have wasted no time in drawing up detailed plans to address all key areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Despite a prolonged period of uncertainty and fragility, leaders, staff and governors have remained highly committed to ensuring that the academy's plan of action ensures the best possible outcomes for all students before the academy is closed in six weeks. In the improvement plan, each area of priority is broken down into small steps, with measurable success criteria against which leaders track and monitor the academy's progress. Leaders regularly review these plans by colour coding the progress made in each area; this mechanism for tracking the academy's progress is shared and discussed with governors and enables clear, systematic evaluation of the impact of leaders' work.

Since the inspection, senior leaders have steered highly focused work across all key areas for improvement identified in the last inspection to ensure that all students achieve well in their remaining time in the academy. These include urgently addressing the quality of teaching, the accuracy of teachers' assessments and improving the way that leaders set targets for students and track students' progress.

Leaders have worked with teachers to agree structures for planning lessons so that leaders can be assured that teachers plan lessons to better support students' learning. Weekly training sessions for teachers have provided a platform to work collaboratively to improve the level of challenge in lessons, create more opportunities for students to solve problems together, and develop effective

approaches to the marking of students' work in order that students receive high-quality feedback. The impact of this work is closely monitored by senior leaders, who now have a more detailed and accurate picture of individual teachers' strengths and areas for further training and support.

Leaders have ensured a relentless focus on preparing Year 11 students for their examinations. Teachers meet every Tuesday morning to check the standard of students' assessments across each subject. Senior leaders work very closely with staff to ensure that this work is accurate and robust. This information about students' achievement enables leaders to have an up-to-date picture of current achievement to provide extra help where appropriate. Current information about the progress of Year 11 students supports leaders' expectations that overall achievement in examinations will improve on the results that the academy gained last year.

The Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust has provided no external support. Leaders have been proactive in securing the support of an outstanding school in the region. They are currently providing subject-specific support for subject leaders and delivering a training programme for a small group of teachers. This is helping teachers to enhance and develop their practice in the classroom so that the students they teach will make faster progress.

Governors are working closely with senior leaders to monitor the effectiveness of the leadership activities set out in the improvement plan. Governors meet regularly with the Principal. They welcome the way in which progress is colour coded against the desired outcomes. Consequently, governors can quickly identify areas in the academy that require further discussion and scrutiny, and therefore hold leaders to account for bringing about improvements.

The external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after) has not yet been carried out.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The proprietor's statement of action is not fit for purpose. The Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust did not prepare a statement of action.

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint NQTs.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Reeves

Associate Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For Academies only - CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk
- The lead inspector