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29 December 2016

Mrs Sian Foreman
UTC Cambridge
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Dear Mrs Foreman

Special measures monitoring inspection of UTC Cambridge

Following my visit with Simon Webb, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your University Technology College (UTC) on 6–7 December 2016, 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 that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the UTC became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in September 2016.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

The UTC's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The UTC may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim management board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in September 2016.

- Secure the safeguarding procedures for the most vulnerable pupils by:
 - establishing rigorous central processes for recording safeguarding concerns, the actions taken and the contacts made with both parents and wider agencies
 - establishing risk-assessment procedures to determine whether concerns are to be managed as safeguarding cases or as welfare and pastoral cases
 - establishing clear lines of responsibility for the management of individual cases and ensuring that, when staff are notified of concerns, they take action swiftly
 - making sure that senior leaders check and hold to account rigorously those that are working with vulnerable pupils.
- Establish a more effective system for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of pupils by:
 - making sure that checks on the whereabouts of pupils, including the most vulnerable and those that live a long way from the college, are carried out very quickly after the first lesson starts
 - changing attitudes to delays on public transport so that they are not perceived by the pupil population and staff as a mitigating excuse but as a problem that needs to be solved
 - making a more concerted effort to improve the attendance rate so that it rises more rapidly than it has over the last two years.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 6–7 December 2016

Evidence

Inspectors observed the UTC's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting principal, the executive principal, groups of pupils, two members of the interim management board, senior leaders and other staff. In response to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection, this monitoring visit focused on the robustness of the UTC's safeguarding arrangements, including its monitoring of attendance and punctuality and its leadership and management.

Context

This UTC was inspected in September 2016. Outcomes for students and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment were judged to be good. The UTC was placed in special measures because systems to check students' welfare and safety were inadequate and this was a result of inadequate leadership and management. Since the previous inspection, the principal has left and the acting principal took up her post on 1 November. An executive principal was appointed in October. The UTC has begun work to enable it to join the Parkside Federation Academies multi-academy trust.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

New leadership has been in place for just over one month. The principal has brought clarity to the roles of senior leaders, enabling them to focus on and be accountable for clear areas of responsibility. The principal has introduced systems and routines, the lack of which was central to the previous judgement of inadequate leadership and management.

The UTC now uses performance management as a vehicle to improve the quality of education. Teachers agreed with one of their colleagues who said that what has really helped her is that lesson observations lead to relevant professional development that meets their individual needs.

The leadership of safeguarding has been transformed. Following the inspection, senior leaders conducted a rigorous review of all child protection files. Unlike at the previous inspection, child protection files now show trails being followed up and actions from multi-agency meetings being followed through. Risk assessment is now more effective as it distinguishes between child protection issues and welfare issues so that cases can be monitored with appropriate urgency. Teachers told inspectors that safeguarding has been much more of a focus in meetings. Staff are aware of the designated safeguarding leaders. Plans exist to provide even more robust quality assurance to safeguarding and child welfare, but are currently hampered by the delay in accessing the required training.

The student council has been reinvigorated during the autumn term and student views are now better represented. The council is currently involved in supporting a

number of school events and views on issues such as additional private study time, which have directly influenced school policy.

Leadership and management of the UTC have improved strongly since the previous inspection. In some instances the impact can already be seen. For example, teachers spoke about how the introduction of the new assessment and tracking software enables them to effectively monitor student progress and check across a range of subjects. Teachers said that they can communicate with parents now, whereas they did not report to parents in the past. Teachers told inspectors that communication in the college is much clearer and they now get quick responses from senior leaders. Leaders carefully negotiate a balance between maintaining the workplace-like ethos of the UTC and the need to manage students' progress, behaviour, attendance and punctuality.

Governors' minutes show that safeguarding has been an agenda item at all meetings since September 2016. The policy for safeguarding and child protection is in date and it has been discussed by governors. It includes issues from latest Department for Education guidance on keeping children safe.

The systems and policies are very new and, while everyone is very positive about them, it is too soon to see their impact. Leaders have not yet had time to ensure that new initiatives such as assessment documentation are being used as intended. There remain some gaps in statutory documents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Attendance has improved this year, as has punctuality. Leaders' new morning checking-in systems have improved punctuality sharply because of the higher level of challenge to students regarding time-keeping and some new buses being provided. Better relationships with transport companies are being developed. Leaders are working hard to ensure that public transport delivers students on time. Teachers are appreciative of their leaders' work on this.

Leaders' actions have had a positive impact on reducing persistent absence because of the 'three letter system', fortnightly management meetings and introduction of parent meetings. Attendance overall has increased because of the clearer accountability in staff roles and new approaches to front door swiping, enabling a quicker response to absence. Importantly, teachers spoke about the changed culture around attendance and punctuality. One teacher said, 'I like the way we have really tightened up on punctuality'. Another said that the focus on safeguarding had 'heightened his radar' regarding attendance and punctuality, commenting, 'I am much more focused on attendance and the whereabouts of individual students'. The attendance of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved sharply. Students were clear that there were now consequences for lack of punctuality, but that teachers were reasonable in judging when lateness was due to factors beyond their control such as public transport problems.

First-day calling procedures have become more robust. Checking on any missing vulnerable students is prioritised before 9am. The UTC has clear records of any students who have left the roll. The follow-up records show that all reasonable actions have been taken to check their whereabouts after leaving.

The UTC's focus on fundamental British values is quite new and students were not able to demonstrate their understanding of this to inspectors.

External support

The local authority conducted two safeguarding audits, one on 5 October and the other on 17 October. In addition, the local authority provided informal advice to the two designated officers between these dates. The designated officers were given support by the local authority, but staff have not been able to access safeguarding training with sufficient urgency. Given that the school was placed in special measures specifically because of inadequacies around safeguarding, it is surprising that the local authority's support has not gone beyond what has been provided. While the UTC is not run by the local authority, the safeguarding of students is something that should be monitored and supported with greater urgency.

The Parkside Federation Academies is a sponsor of the UTC. It has been providing support since March 2016 through a 'School to School' support programme. Two senior leaders from Parkside Federation have been giving leadership support, and this has now been formalised with the support becoming permanent and full time. In early October, the national leader of education who had been supporting the UTC became the executive principal. Following the September inspection, the specialist leader of education who had been supporting the UTC was allocated to the UTC full time and appointed as acting principal on 1 November.