

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Sian Foreman
UTC Cambridge
Robinson Way
Cambridge
Cambridgeshire
CB2 0SZ

Dear Mrs Foreman

Special measures monitoring inspection of UTC Cambridge

Following my visit to your University Technology College (UTC) on 2 March 2017, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school 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 school's improvement/action plan is fit for purpose.

The school 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 both with 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 second monitoring inspection on 2 March 2017

Evidence

This monitoring inspection was carried out by one inspector for one day to check that the UTC's momentum of improvement remained on track. He observed the UTC's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting principal, the executive principal representing the governance of the multi-academy trust, a group of students, 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. At the time of the previous visit, the acting principal had been in post for only one month. There have been no further significant changes. Work has continued to enable the UTC to join the Parkside Federation Academies multi-academies trust.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the positive impact of the new leadership has become clearer. This could be seen in the way teachers and students now use assessment information to accelerate students' progress. The focus has now switched from implementation to checking that policies make a positive difference. Teachers confirmed that leaders are clear in their expectations of them and the UTC operates in a systematic manner. Leaders have clear responsibilities and staff know to whom and for what they are accountable.

Students confirm that the UTC continues to improve. The student voice has a higher profile through the student council. It has been instrumental in helping leaders and students understand the concerns of each. Parents feel better informed through the parents' forum and regular newsletters.

The leadership of safeguarding is now effective. Procedures are robust. The requirement to secure the safeguarding procedures for the most vulnerable pupils is met. Staff have received additional training on safeguarding including the anti-radicalisation 'Prevent' strategy. E-safety has been reviewed and the filtering of websites has been stepped up to a point where students complain about this hampering their research. Clearly, there is a fine line between protecting students

from inappropriate or harmful websites and enabling them to carry out legitimate independent research. Students explained that assemblies have been used to promote internet safety and to promote fundamental values. Students reported that they are helped to stay safe through the 'Big Question' days which are the UTC's means for teaching some elements of personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) education.

Leaders have sought and acted upon external advice. This, together with the rapid improvements brought about by the new leadership, makes UTC well placed for the removal of special measures well within the expected timescale.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The improved attendance and punctuality noted at the previous monitoring inspection have been maintained. Attendance is in line with the national average. The high expectation around attendance was demonstrated by a student asking the inspector why expectations for attendance here were so much higher than at another college. The procedures to check on the whereabouts of late students that had recently been introduced at the time of the previous monitoring, have been maintained and continue to have a very positive impact on punctuality. Students were keen to tell the inspector that as a result of pressure from the college, transport arrangements such as the bus service have improved, assisting their punctuality.

Staff report that systems for dealing with concerns regarding student welfare are robust and effective. 'Cause for concern' slips are given directly to senior leaders so that they 'cannot be left around and forgotten'. Handing the slips directly to leaders generates a conversation with staff so that leaders have a fuller picture. New procedures for handling concerns are enabling leaders to prioritise appropriately and escalate them as necessary. Teachers appreciate that they are now told the outcome of any concern that they pass on.

Students were very positive about the 'Big Question' days and especially a recent one about government and elections. On this visit, the inspector did not investigate whether the days provide adequate curriculum coverage of PHSE, citizenship and religious education.

Many aspects of careers and work-related learning are excellent. A wide range of local employers are involved in working with the UTC on business-relevant science 'Challenges'. As a result of the high-quality work produced by students, employers see the UTC as a fertile ground for recruiting. Given that one of the characteristics of the UTC is 'a work and career focused culture' it is surprising that the UTC's target is for only 80% of key stage 4 students to participate in five days of work experience and 80% of post-16 students.

External support

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the local authority has provided safeguarding training for the principal. A representative of the local authority has visited the school and worked with the principal to ensure that processes and records around recruitment reflect best practice. The UTC has commissioned and acted upon the detailed report on safeguarding from an external consultant.

The Parkside Federation Academies continues to provide effective and well-judged support as UTC joins their multi-academy trust.