

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 October 2017

Mr Chris Mallaband
Principal
Bacon's College
Timber Pond Road
Rotherhithe
London
SE16 6AT

Dear Mr Mallaband

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bacon's College

Following my visit with Noeman Anwar and Carolyn Dickinson, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), to your college on 15 September 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 college's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2017.

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 trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The college's action plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the college may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southwark. This letter will

be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2017

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders and governors urgently undertake safer recruitment training so they are aware of and follow statutory guidance in relation to safeguarding
 - pre-employment checks meet statutory requirements, and senior leaders and governors rigorously monitor safeguarding practices across the school
 - leaders put in place appropriate and sustained training for all leaders and teachers, giving them the skills that they need to improve the quality of their work
 - leaders complete the planned review of the structure of the school day to ensure that sufficient teaching time is allocated to subjects across the curriculum
 - leaders and governors evaluate with precision the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, particularly the middle- and higher-ability pupils, and those that need to catch up in Year 7
 - leadership of special educational needs support is effective in enabling pupils to make at least good progress so they are well prepared for the next steps in their education
 - assessment and monitoring processes are fit for purpose, allowing leaders and teachers to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils from their starting points, including at key stage 3
 - systems for setting targets to manage the performance of staff are rooted in high ambition and that targets link fully to whole-school priorities, particularly in relation to groups of pupils that are underachieving
 - all teachers consistently apply school policies, particularly in relation to literacy, behaviour and assessment.
- Rapidly improve outcomes and the quality of teaching across the school by:
 - leaders using allocated funding for pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up and special educational needs effectively
 - ensuring that all teachers challenge and support pupils in their learning, using engaging learning activities that are matched to pupils' different needs and starting points
 - leaders and teachers using intervention strategies more effectively to support pupils that have fallen behind in their learning
 - all teachers actively improving pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 15 September 2017

Evidence

This monitoring inspection focused on the effectiveness of safeguarding. It also considered aspects of leadership and management. Other areas for improvement were not looked at in detail although they were referred to through discussions with leaders, trustees, and the regional director of United Learning.

Inspectors held meetings with the principal and vice principals, with the prospective executive headteacher from United Learning, and with the vice-chair and clerk of trustees. The school's single central record of checks made on staff backgrounds was scrutinised; meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead and her deputy. Inspectors also met with a group of newly qualified teachers, made short visits to lessons, spoke informally to pupils and took note of attendance records. Other documents scrutinised by inspectors included minutes of governing board meetings, the school's action and improvement plans, records of exclusions and behaviour, and plans for teachers' continuing professional development.

Context

Since the inspection in February 2017, the leadership restructure has been completed. A number of senior leaders have left, including two vice principals; two new vice principals have been appointed to lead on teaching and learning and to lead on safeguarding and pupils' well-being. At the end of the summer term, the Department for Education approved the re-brokering of the college's sponsorship. From 1 November 2017, Bacon's College will no longer be a single, standalone academy but will instead be part of United Learning, a multi-academy trust.

The principal has decided to step aside from 1 October; the vice principal responsible for teaching and learning will act as principal for the remainder of this academic year. She will be supported by two very experienced leaders from United Learning who will act as executive headteacher and regional director.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inspectors are satisfied that the school's safeguarding arrangements are now effective.

Leaders and governors have worked hard to rectify the deficiencies in safeguarding found during the February 2017 inspection. The vice principal responsible for safeguarding and the chair of trustees have led this work well. All relevant senior staff and governors have undertaken safer recruitment training. The single central record is complete; appointments made since February have been undertaken

thoroughly and have followed all due processes.

When talking to inspectors, newly qualified teachers spoke accurately and with understanding about key safeguarding issues such as extremism and radicalisation, female genital mutilation, and child sexual exploitation. As part of their induction, they have received thorough and appropriate training. Pupils spoken to by inspectors all said that they felt safe in school. Pupil absences are followed up in a timely manner.

The review of governance, which was recommended by the February 2017 inspection, was completed by an external assessor in May 2017. This review recognised that the governing board had good oversight of financial matters and acted in a way that exemplified the college's values and ethos. However, the review also revealed tension between the governing body and senior leadership that was evident before the February 2017 inspection and which continued to be a concern.

Despite this, it is clear that trustees, governors and leaders accepted the college's parlous situation. They put differences to one side and have worked together to secure a new sponsor. Trustees and leaders who spoke to inspectors recognise that re-brokering is needed to provide the long-term capacity and support that is essential for the college's sustained improvement. Negotiations have been completed effectively. There has been no noticeably adverse effect on the confidence and morale of pupils, staff, parents or the community.

Significant improvements to safeguarding and the increase in capacity through re-brokered sponsorship are important steps toward the removal of special measures. However, significant weaknesses remain in the college's work. During the re-brokering and the necessary focus on safeguarding, some other day-to-day aspects of governance have been neglected. All parties who spoke to inspectors acknowledged that, following the leadership restructure, a similar restructure of governance is necessary and overdue. Arrangements for teachers' continuing professional development remain poor. Leaders recognise that this has an unfavourable effect on the quality of pupils' learning. Finally, while behaviour seen in lessons was generally calm and compliant, behaviour around the school is sometimes still over-boisterous and too many incidents lead to pupils being excluded.

External support

A former HMI was appointed by the diocese to act as school improvement adviser in September 2016. Although United Learning will not take on the sponsorship of Bacon's College formally until 1 November 2017, support from United Learning has already started. Two highly experienced and successful headteachers are working with senior leaders and supporting the day-to-day management of the college. The regional director of United Learning has a realistic view of the college's current position, recognising that significant weaknesses remain, including in teaching and

learning and in teachers' professional development.