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Lesley Glover  
Headteacher  
Central Bedfordshire UTC  
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Kingsland Skills Centre  
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Dear Mrs Glover

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Central Bedfordshire UTC**

Following my visit to your college on 21–22 October 2014, 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 college's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the college 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 college is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the college 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 Central Bedfordshire, The Education Funding Agency and the Department for Education – Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - providing teachers with training to improve their questioning skills and ensure they check students' learning and adjust the time spent on different tasks in lessons when necessary
  - ensuring teachers have accurate subject knowledge and use it to inspire and enthuse students.
  
- Raise the achievement of all groups of students by ensuring that:
  - information about students' learning and aptitudes is fully used to plan activities that challenge them to make faster progress in lessons
  - the policy for developing students' skills in mathematics and English is implemented rapidly and applied consistently
  - marking guides the students' improvement effectively
  - any gaps in students' skills, knowledge and understanding from previous key stages are identified and plugged.
  
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
  - developing a system to record and analyse the outcomes of monitoring in order to plan improvement
  - ensuring that the curriculum gives equal access to enrichment opportunities for all students and provides good support for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
  - implementing a rigorous performance management system throughout the college
  - developing the curriculum in conjunction with the college's sponsors to meet the aspirations for university technology colleges.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 21–22 October 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the college's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, teaching and support staff, groups of students from Year 11 and the sixth form, members of staff from Bedford College and the Chair and other members of the Governing Body. The inspector visited a number of lessons, accompanied by senior leaders, to observe students' learning and look at their work. The college's records of recruitment checks on staff were also scrutinised.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, the two interim principals have left the college and have been replaced by a headteacher. A head of engineering will join the college in mid-December 2014. No students were admitted into Year 10 in September 2014. The governing body has been restructured. An existing member of staff has taken on the role of head of pastoral care. A data manager has been appointed. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) who is employed by Bedford College, works one day a week at Central Bedfordshire UTC.

### **Achievement of pupils at the college**

As there were no students in Year 11 last year, a very small number of sixth form students who re-sat GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, physics and chemistry gained GCSE qualifications in 2014. A few of these achieved good A\* to C grades. A small number of students in the sixth form sat examinations at AS and A2 Level. The pass rate at AS Level increased from 57% to 71%, although few students achieved the top grades. The pass rate at A2 Level was 86%, with 43% achieving A\* to C grades. Students achieved less well in mathematics than in other subjects. Students were much more successful at achieving City and Guilds qualifications and, in particular, BTEC Level 3 Extended Diplomas in engineering, with the majority achieving distinctions.

Data shown to the inspector for the current Year 11, which is based on regular assessments using past examination papers, show that these students are achieving well in English but making less progress in mathematics.

There are very few students in the college who are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium. These students have been offered extra support for mathematics and some attended catch-up classes for mathematics during the summer holiday. However, they make less progress in mathematics than their peers. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has ensured that teachers have individual support plans for students who have special educational

needs. The few students in the college who are disabled or who have special educational needs make expected progress.

### **The quality of teaching**

Students experience teaching which has a variable impact on their learning and progress. While some teaching is accelerating students' progress and deepening their knowledge and understanding, such as in English, other teaching is not planned meticulously enough to ensure that all students make the progress they should. Where teaching is most effective, it challenges students to exceed their target grades, both through the work students are expected to do and through teachers' skilled use of questioning. Teachers have accurate subject knowledge but do not always use this to best effect to interest and inspire students. Where teaching has less impact on learning and progress, teachers do not always make clear what they expect students to have achieved by the end of the lesson.

The majority of students who met with the inspector report that more teachers are making an effort to ensure that the work is more closely matched to their capabilities, but, where this is not the case, more-able students say their progress is being hampered and those who need additional support cannot always understand the work. Planned lessons frequently make reference to aspects of engineering and product design, which makes the learning more relevant to students' interests.

The quality of marking has improved since the previous monitoring visit. Books are marked more regularly and more teachers are providing detailed feedback which identifies what students do well and how they can improve. Some marking is less helpful because it is too general in nature and does not target individual students' areas for improvement. Where marking is most effective, students respond to their teachers' comments or complete additional tasks to show that they have understood what they got wrong. Some teachers are more adept than others at identifying and correcting students' poor spelling.

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

Students respond well in lessons to teaching which is effective in meeting their specific individual needs. Teachers who know their students well plan activities which sustain their interest. Hence, there is less likelihood that students become disengaged in their learning and disrupt the learning of others. However, the college's own behaviour logs and discussions with students indicate that low-level disruptive behaviour has not been eradicated. Such incidents are carefully recorded by teachers. This helps leaders to identify trends and target appropriate support towards those students who require it.

Students move between lessons with purpose and very few arrive late to lessons. They interact well with each other at break times, and relationships between students and members of staff are positive.

Students' attendance is too low, particularly for students in Year 11. They are well below the college target of 95%. The college has appointed an attendance officer who is attempting to engage with parents and carers in encouraging their children to attend college more regularly.

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

The more stable leadership structure is starting to have an impact on driving improvement. The vast majority of staff have responded positively to senior leaders' raised expectations. Senior leaders have evaluated the impact of the actions they are taking and are conveying their vision for the college effectively to both staff and students. Senior leaders have produced a realistic evaluation of the college's current performance based on a wide range of up-to-date information. New roles have been created to fill some of the college's gaps in staffing. For example, there is now a head of pastoral care, a data manager, and a new head of engineering is about to join the college. Lines of responsibility are clearer and all staff now have job descriptions. Consequently, they know what is expected of them, and managers are able to hold them to account more robustly.

Teaching is managed more effectively. Weaker teaching is being tackled through well-planned guidance and support. These teachers are observed more regularly than others. All teachers have the opportunity to discuss aspects of effective teaching at weekly staff meetings. Senior leaders are gaining a more accurate profile of the quality of teaching by gathering a wider range of information based on observations of teaching, students' outcomes, scrutiny of students' work and discussions with students. In addition, senior leaders visit lessons more regularly to focus on specific aspects of teaching and learning. The management of teachers' performance is becoming more robust, and teachers are expected to link at least one of their targets to students' progress.

Senior leaders reviewed the curriculum during the summer term and also consulted with potential applicants to ensure that the range of subjects and qualifications on offer was appropriate. As a result of this consultation, courses in games design are being offered from 2015. Students' learning is enriched at the end of each day through a wide range of extra-curricular activities which include academic and sporting events.

The external review of governance was delayed due to the planned restructuring of the governing body. However, there are plans to conduct this review in mid-November 2014. It is important that the governors act swiftly on the outcomes of

review and produce an action plan. However, governors are clear about their role and know the strengths and areas for development of the college.

### **External support**

The contribution made by staff at Bedford College has had a marked impact on establishing clearer systems for leading and managing the college. Expertise has been well deployed to help market the college to the wider community, in appointing a special educational needs coordinator, helping to provide additional support for students in mathematics during the summer holiday and to plan a revised curriculum for the new Year 10 intake in 2015. The engineering department has worked productively with staff from Bedford College to make sure that their assessment of students' progress becomes more accurate. The Director of Quality, Performance and Standards from Bedford College has worked well with the new headteacher in providing an appropriate level of challenge and support. She has also helped to secure a more accurate profile of the quality of teaching by observing teaching with the college's senior leaders. Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the sponsor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose.