



Rachel Guyer
Launchpad

**People's Services
Director's Office**

Atlas House
Corporation Street
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 1LD

Contact: Mike Hoban
Tel: 01744 671805

mikewyatt@sthelens.gov.uk
Our ref: MHJB

Dear Rachel

LAUNCHPAD CENTRE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BOARD 03/02/2016

Thank you for meeting with myself, Joanne Davies, Councillor Jeanette Banks and Mike Hoban at Atlas House on 3rd February 2016.

You attended along with Denise Clayton, Head of Alternative Provision in St Helens. I undertook to write to you as soon as possible to set out the SIB's views and recommendations arising out of the full and frank discussions based on your presentation addressing (i) The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management, (ii) Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, (iii) Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare and (iv) Outcomes for Pupils.

1. **EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The Action Plan has been improved and evidenced by external monitoring reports.
- It is reviewed monthly at the SLT meetings.
- Success criteria, completion targets and the separation of leading and monitoring roles are now included.
- Joint lesson observations with SIP and ex-HMI have quality assured judgements made by the leadership team.
- Baseline assessment is used to set targets, not school data.
- Aspirational progress targets of one sub level progress per term for each pupil have been set. The SIB noted that these were very ambitious.
- Joint SMT responses to improvement planning and unit leaders presenting detailed reports to the Management Committee are producing a more collective and effective approach to teaching and learning.
- The Academic Monitoring Calendar is providing consistency across all stages.
- The Management Committee is providing a more robust monitoring system.

2. **QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

- The appointment of permanent staff has impacted positively on Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
- The 'Buddy' system with Cowley and Penkford has improved the provision for pupils.
- Planning, marking, work scrutiny, lesson observations and assessment improvements have shown that students are being suitably challenged and are receiving effective feedback.
- Teacher meetings and protected time are leading to a collective and supportive approach to planning and delivery.
- Launchpad stated that 83% of lessons are now judged to be Good or better.
- However, external validation of lesson observations needs more precise and comparative data.
- Pupil Voice is a strength, as staff are with pupils for most of the day. 'Individual Support Plans' and 'My Progress Chart' provide evidence of how pupils have a voice and how that is being heard and acted on.
- It is vital to show improvements since the last monitoring visit. Triangulation of in-school data must be put in hand, in order to demonstrate that students are making good progress.

3. **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE**

- 'My Progress Chart' measures the student position on entry and exit. It covers aspects needed to make improvements e.g. attendance, punctuality and attitudes.
- The 'Tracking Pupil Progress' *pro forma* provides a useful overview of information and intervention and academic performance.
- Progress is measured against national expectations.
- 58% of pupils improved on their pre-entry attendance. The focus also has to be on the 42% who have not. The LA has comparative LA attendance figures, which shows that attendance is better in comparable units in LAs which are statistical neighbours to St Helens. It is recommended that Launchpad contacts those LAs where the attendance percentage is higher to establish what strategies they have used to improve attendance.

4. **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

- Launchpad is developing more secure, rigorous internal systems and structures to make accurate judgements on students' academic progress.
- Documentary evidence was provided to exemplify those processes, such as tracking students' progress – Overview, and KS3 Assessment Tracking 2016.
- There are systems in place to test students' mastery of skills.
- More secure evidence is needed for the next monitoring visit which shows good progress being made.

5. **NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER ACTIONS**

Strategies were outlined to make further progress on the areas outlined in the Monitoring Visit (15th May 2015) e.g. To continue to raise expectations, improve academic and pastoral outcomes

(especially attendance) for students, and to ensure all staff work to deadlines as part of a rigorous appraisal process.

Aspirational progress targets of one sub level progress per term for each pupil have been set, but the SIB considered that they were very ambitious. Given that, Launchpad should consider reviewing the targets with its SIP and its external moderator.

It is vital to prioritise, plan and then put into action specific strategies whose success can be evidenced for the next monitoring visit.

Launchpad is an acute provision demanding individual detail and delivery. It also demands effective monitoring, evaluation and review. This needs to be supported by evidence that is robust.

I congratulate you and all the staff, the Management Committee, parents and especially the students for the progress made so far. There is more to achieve and for Launchpad to realise its potential and move out of Requires Improvement to the Good category.

Once you have discussed this letter with your staff and Management Committee, I would be grateful if it could be posted on your website so parents can see the progress being made on the journey to being judged Good.

I am copying this letter to Councillor Banks, Mike Wyatt, Jo Davies and your Chair of Governors.

Yours sincerely

P. W. Fitzpatrick
Chair, School Improvement Board