

PROTECT-INSPECTION

CfBT Inspection Services T 0300 1231231
Suite 22 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
West Lancs Investment Centre www.ofsted.gov.uk
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Direct T 01695 566939
Direct F 01695 729320
glaw@cfbt.com
www.cfbt-inspections.com



16 July 2011

Mr N Hurn
Executive headteacher
St Wilfrid's RC College
Temple Park Road
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE34 0PH

Dear Mr Hurn,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Wilfrid's RC College

Following my visit with Mrs Ann Wallis and Mr Derek Neil, additional inspectors, to your college on Thursday 14 July and by me alone on Friday 15 July 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures - good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly-Qualified Teachers may be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted 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 Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and the Director of Children's Services for South Tyneside.

Yours sincerely

Mark Wilson
Additional Inspector

January 2011

PROTECT-INSPECTION



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 18 Oct 2010

- As a matter of urgency, raise students' attainment and improve their progress in English, mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that both higher-attaining and average-attaining students achieve the grades expected of them in English, mathematics and science
 - ensuring attainment is at least in line with the national average in each subject, for students currently in Year 11 and for all subsequent year groups
 - increasing the proportion of students gaining A and A* grades in all subjects.

- Improve the skills of leaders and managers and the governing body as a matter of urgency, by:
 - making clear to the senior leaders their key role in all aspects of the school's performance
 - ensuring that senior leaders give clear direction to staff at all levels about their role in school improvement, and spell out their accountability for this
 - ensuring that senior leaders have clearly-defined roles and line management responsibilities and are able to demonstrate their contribution to school improvement
 - improving the skills and effectiveness of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science to raise attainment and inspire ambition in their departments
 - ensuring that the governing body has a full and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness, through direct monitoring of the school's work, from which they can support and challenge the school and hold the headteacher to account.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons, especially English, mathematics and science, by:
 - ensuring that teachers' use of assessment information supports students' learning
 - raising teachers' expectations of how hard students should work in lessons
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that it clearly informs students of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

- Improve the curriculum in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3, by ensuring that it provides continuity and clear progression and prepares students for work in Key Stage 4.

Special measures: monitoring of St Wilfrid's RC College

Report from the second monitoring inspection from 14 to 15 Jul 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the college's work, including 21 part lessons as well as shorter visits to lessons. They scrutinised documents, met with a group of students, the executive headteacher, the head of college designate and other key staff. In addition, interviews were held with the vice-chair of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection the appointments of the executive headteacher and head of college designate have been confirmed until August 2013.

The interim head of college intends to retire at the end of this academic year. Four assistant headteachers with individual leadership responsibility for English, science, vocational learning and pastoral care respectively have been appointed. Heads of department have also been appointed for French and music. All of these posts take effect from the start of the autumn term. The senior leadership team has been restructured and a new staffing structure has been agreed.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The school's latest data indicate that the attainment of Year 11 students in 2011 is likely to be much better than for the previous cohort in 2010. All key measures as well as the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, suggest a significant rise on last year. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is predicted to rise for students of all abilities. Results already gained, albeit some provisional and others from early entry testing contribute to this improving picture. While attainment in GCSE science and GCSE geography is expected to be clearly an improvement in 2011, it is still likely to be below what was the 2010 national average. Both subjects remain an on-going area for development for the school. The proportion of students predicted to gain the A* and A grades, for example in the separate sciences, English and mathematics is also an increase from that in 2010. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to be eligible for free school meals are also making better progress in their learning. The senior leadership has focused strongly on raising achievement and consequently students are continuing to make better progress in lessons because of the improving teaching. This reflects the increased level of challenge which is being provided for all students including the most-able. Through its improved monitoring of student performance the college has been able to provide better-targeted support for students.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- As a matter of urgency raise students' attainment and improve their progress in English, mathematics and science - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Students continue to demonstrate welcoming and positive behaviour. Students say they feel safe and that bullying is not an issue, helped considerably by the college's clear code of conduct and expectations. Students really appreciate the way lessons have become more interesting and that the work now challenges them to think harder. In some lessons, students make a very effective contribution to their learning through their keenness and interest; in a minority of other lessons this is less so and they remain passive to an extent. While improving, students' passivity to their learning is dependent upon the quality of teaching they receive.

The effectiveness of provision

As a result of the strong lead on providing effective professional development, the overall quality of teaching and learning has improved strongly; in some lessons outstanding teaching was observed. Sharing of best practice is continuing through the voluntary teaching and learning group and the coaching initiative is contributing very well to the increased proportion of improved teaching. Teachers now make students aware of clear learning objectives and success criteria in their lessons; in the better lessons regular referrals are made to these to check on the students' progress. In some of the improved though less effective lessons, this approach was a little too laboured and mechanistic at times. Teachers are planning their lessons and getting much better at matching the learning to the needs of the students. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge and an understanding of how to reshape the students' learning where necessary. While teachers' expectations and the use of assessment to support learning have continued to improve, for example, in English and mathematics, there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback students receive; as seen for example in science and geography. The leadership recognises the need to continue to address quickly the remaining weak teaching and its legacy, as well as ensure the use of non-specialist or temporary teaching does not adversely affect students' learning. The quality of teaching in science is improving but variable.

A lot of effective work has gone into improving the curriculum at Key Stage 3, where more time from September has been given to the teaching of English and mathematics. Work has focused upon developing a modular curriculum with assessment opportunities built in and which ensures a continuity of learning and clarity as to students' next learning steps. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has also been improved with more opportunities offered in the new autumn term. Leaders are aware that this curriculum requires their staff to plan

more astutely for the progress of individual and groups of students. This is not always a feature in all lessons currently as some planning focuses more on what the students will do than the skills they will develop.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons, especially English, mathematics and science, - good.

- Improve the curriculum in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3, by ensuring that it provides continuity and clear progression and prepares students for work in Key Stage 4 - good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders continue to drive the college forward through the many improvement actions undertaken. The executive headteacher's vision is shared effectively and well understood, especially in terms of the very clear roles and responsibilities all staff hold in improving the college. There is an unequivocal determination to continue the improvements made so far.

Leaders are having a more noticeable impact on the work of the college, particularly in improving teaching, a point clearly confirmed by the students. Teachers generally are now very keen to improve and embrace the offers of professional development. Middle leaders are now holding their staff much more to account for the quality of teaching and learning within their subject areas. As a result of this improved effectiveness of middle leaders the ambition for the vast majority of staff in departments to improve strongly is now more keenly felt.

There is now more rigour in the way the leaders, for example as in English and mathematics, undertake the regular monitoring of their own staff. However, it is recognised that there is a need for middle leaders to further refine their monitoring activities as well as their evaluation of the monitoring findings. For example, scrutiny of students' work does not always provide a full picture of the progress students make. The governing body has become much more rigorous in undertaking its duties. It now holds leaders much more effectively to account and regularly challenges any areas of potential weakness. Its members are embracing the role of critical friend well. As a result of the improvements made, the capacity for sustained improvement is growing.

The specialist subjects of mathematics and computing have become more involved in delivering training to other teachers, for example, on ensuring the needs of students are more effectively met in lessons.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the skills of leaders and managers and the governing body as a matter of urgency - good

External support

The college continues to benefit from the very effective partnership with Cardinal Hume School, brokered by the diocese. This has led to a much stronger collegiate approach to leadership and very effective professional development for the college staff. Invaluable support has continued through the very effective links with other schools. The School Improvement Partner is a valued critical friend to the college who has provided effective support and challenge. The local authority has provided very effective support through its supported college reviews.

Priorities for further improvement

- Address the issue of the very small minority of weak teaching that remains and ensure that any weak learning that has consequently accrued is tackled effectively.