

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566 937
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jsimmons@cfbt.com



27 January 2012

Mrs Head
Headteacher
Danesgate Community
Danesgate
Fulford Cross
York
North Yorkshire
YO10 4PB

Dear Mrs Head

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Danesgate Community

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your centre on 26 January 2012, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to the teachers and students whose lessons I visited and who spoke to me about their work. Please also thank the parents, chair of the management committee, representative of the local authority and deputy headteacher from a local secondary school who also talked to me.

Since the 2010 inspection there has been a restructuring of the senior staff team which now comprises the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, achievement manager and a manager of staff's professional development. In addition, co-ordinators for English and mathematics have been appointed along with an office manager. The number of students on roll has risen to 157 with a substantial increase in the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 October 2010, the centre was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the centre has made good progress in making improvements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school's assessment data show that the attainment of students when they arrive at the centre has lessened markedly over the past three years. Despite this and although the students' attainment remains low, it is on the rise. A number of factors have contributed to students increasing their rates of progress and subsequently improving their levels of attainment. Curriculum developments and, notably, one-to-one programmes of study have enticed more of the hard-to-reach students into school. The curriculum has been revised to

January 2012



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

ensure that as many students as possible gain externally-accredited awards to give them a meaningful currency in life beyond school. This is reaping rewards as shown by the proportion of students gaining five or more A* - G grades in GCSE doubling in 2010/11. Encouragingly, the proportion of students moving into education, employment or training when they leave school has improved considerably over the last couple of years. Outside of academic progress students are improving their personal and social skills and, as a consequence, they and their teachers are able to focus almost exclusively on their learning rather than the management of behaviour.

The quality of teaching

Teachers' planning has improved as students' levels of attainment and their targets are taken more into account. The centre's revised learning and achievement policy very clearly spells out the expectations of the centre. Lesson observations have made a valuable contribution to improvements in teaching. Professional development has been fruitful in helping improve teachers' skills at assessing students' learning during lessons and in summative ways. Although improved, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' questioning of students with opportunities lost in some lessons to check on their understanding and to get them to think more about what they are learning.

The lessons observed during the monitoring inspection show that relationships between staff and students are good. The students find the activities interesting and relevant and they recognise the imperative to stay on task and persevere. This is helped greatly by them knowing their current grades and targets and teachers making good reference to them in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The centre's consistent use of a points system makes a good contribution to effective management of behaviour. Students say they find the rewards they can achieve are worthwhile incentives. They also make comment on how students who do misbehave do not generally affect their learning adversely. In the lessons observed students were courteous and respectful to staff and to one another.

The imperative for students to attend has been substantially strengthened and increasingly staff are being equipped for, and expected to play a full part in, tackling absence. The centre's recording of attendance and its monitoring and use of attendance data are much improved. Senior staff acknowledge there is still more to do in analysing data further to unpick trends for groups of students and to make a link between achievement and attendance data. Nevertheless, the rate of attendance has risen by nearly 10 percentage points in the last year. The appointment of a consultant who was previously a senior educational welfare officer in the local authority has been very helpful.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The members of the newly-constructed senior team are working effectively together and have been well-supported by the centre's School Improvement Partner whose reports show an accurate insight into the effectiveness of the centre and helpful challenge and support. The headteacher's previous experience as a headteacher of a secondary school is bearing well on the drive to raise expectations and the profile of learning. Good inroads have been made into the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The centre's use of data has markedly improved and is being driven well by the headteacher and the tenacious work of the achievement manager. Purposeful use is being made of the data by senior staff and the management committee in measuring the impact of the centre's work and setting out plans and objectives for improvement. The much improved use of data has also played its part in improving the rate of attendance.

The school improvement plan is based on a good appreciation of the centre's strengths and weaknesses and prominent in this are actions to improve the quality of teachers' assessments further. A good example of the effectiveness of the newly-formed framework for quality assurance is how the centre's thorough evaluation of the students' examination results and rates of progress in 2010/11 has led to a series of conclusions and actions for the staff to take. The good strides forward and the improved systems for quality-assuring the work of the centre have given the centre a better capacity to improve further.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Craven
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2010

- Improve attendance by at least 10% by:
 - improving the recording of reasons for absence
 - analysing data to inform actions taken.

- Ensure that data about students' attainment and progress consistently informs improvement priorities by:
 - putting systems in place to enable efficient collection about students' attainment and progress
 - undertaking a detailed analysis of the data collected.

- Ensure that all students are challenged throughout the lesson by adjusting questioning and tasks to match students' understanding as the lesson proceeds.