

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 566939
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: glaw@cfbt.com



22 March 2012

Miss Bleasdale
Headteacher
Blessed Trinity RC College
Ormerod Road
Burnley
Lancashire
BB10 3AA

Dear Miss Bleasdale

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Blessed Trinity RC College

Following my visit with Mary Lanovy-Taylor and Paul Latham, Additional Inspectors to your school on 20 and 21 March 2012, 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 school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2011. 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 and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 and the Executive Director for Children and Young People for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Northern

Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011

- Develop and implement a sharp and focused programme to improve the achievement of all students, to include:
 - clear, appropriate and ambitious targets for each student, carefully explained to them and their parents and carers
 - systematic evaluation of progress data so that strategic action can quickly be taken when groups of students, such as boys, do not make appropriate progress
 - intervention to address any gaps in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) that might restrict students' progress.

- Implement as a matter of urgency, a concerted and whole-school programme to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school, so that learning can proceed effectively for all students.

- Develop a whole-school teaching and learning strategy to increase the proportion of teaching which is good and outstanding, through:
 - greater precision in the framing of learning objectives to enable students to understand more clearly what they need to learn, and that relate more precisely to their prior attainment
 - planning that includes a range of tasks and activities in each lesson to suit the abilities and learning styles of all students
 - using more active learning approaches, so that students are able to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

- Improve the strategic leadership of the college by ensuring that:
 - self-evaluation is accurate, analytical and thorough
 - strategic development planning clearly identifies the college's key priorities, in order to direct the energy of all staff most effectively
 - action plans are precise, time-limited, evaluated and effective
 - the strategic plan is regularly reviewed and updated in the light of progress
 - senior leaders and the governing body communicate regularly with parents and carers, and systematically seek and act upon their views
 - the governing body maintains a clear view of the performance of the school and effectively holds leaders and managers to account.

Special measures: monitoring of Blessed Trinity RC College

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 March 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed 23 parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with managers from the school. A series of shorter visits to lessons was also conducted, including a focus on students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Inspectors undertook a wide scrutiny of students' work, including a focused scrutiny of work in mathematics from a cross-section of students in Year 10 and the work of a small number of students in Year 11 across all of their subjects. Inspectors met with groups of students, representatives from the governing body and from the local authority and held meetings with a wide range of staff from the school.

Context

Since the last inspection, the senior management position to lead on teaching and learning has been confirmed and the senior pastoral coordinator has retired. Although there has been very little turnover of staff across the school, teacher absence continues to affect the stability of staffing in mathematics and science.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Current assessment information indicates that more Year 11 students are on track to meet their targets in a range of GCSE subjects, including in English and mathematics, than was the case at the beginning of this academic year. The school's own data also indicate improvements in other year groups. This improvement is mainly due to a range of interventions targeted at specific groups of students, mainly in Year 11, to enable them to close gaps in their prior learning. These interventions have been designed to meet the specific needs of groups of students and are informed by the increasingly rigorous and robust use of assessment information. However, some weaknesses remain, particularly in science and mathematics. These weaknesses are due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in both subjects. This has resulted in a small decline in predicted levels of achievement for students following core and additional science courses. The achievement of girls in mathematics remains a concern, although interventions are in place in Year 11 to mitigate this issue. A scrutiny of students' work shows that the same variation is often evident across a range of different subjects and teaching sets.

Support for literacy across the curriculum is in its infancy and there remains considerable variation in the effectiveness with which literacy is promoted across the broad range of students' subjects. There is considerable variation, for example, in the standards of presentation of students' work. By contrast, targeted support for those students who have specific literacy needs is increasingly effective and the impact of this work can be seen in

the overall reduction in the numbers of students across all year groups who are accessing this support.

Students' progress in lessons is beginning to accelerate because of improvements in the overall quality of teaching, although some unevenness remains. In the best lessons, students understand clearly what they are learning and why. The improved use of assessment information ensures that tasks and activities engage and challenge all groups of students. However, in less effective lessons, the pace of learning slows because tasks are not sufficiently well adapted to meet the needs of all groups of students in the class, particularly the most able.

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

- develop and implement a sharp and focused programme to improve the achievement of all students – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

The proportion of teaching that is good or better has increased slightly since the previous monitoring inspection, with examples of outstanding teaching seen. The impact of work to support the development of teaching can be seen in the greater range of approaches used to engage and involve students in their learning. Where teaching is most effective, there is a clear focus on progression in learning and teaching summarises and draws together students' learning well, helping them to recognise the key points more clearly. In less effective teaching, there is a focus on pace of delivery, rather than pace of learning, and although students are enabled to work together in groups, they sometimes do so without a clear idea of how learning may best be developed in this way. While summative assessment information is being used increasingly well to inform teachers' planning and lesson organisation, not all teaching makes best use of assessment information that arises during lessons – the comment of one Year 10 student echoed the views of others: 'teachers need to find out if we can do the work, before asking us to do the work'. Questioning strategies that sought short answers from a few students did not probe the extent and depth of learning well; the best teaching involved all students in thinking through their responses with each other before sharing their ideas with the whole class.

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

- develop a whole-school teaching and learning strategy to increase the proportion of teaching which is good and outstanding – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour continues to improve. Students are polite and welcoming to visitors and they respond well to requests and instructions from staff. Students' movement around the school, including during the fire alarm that took place during the inspection, is calm and orderly and very little boisterous behaviour occurs. Levels of staff supervision are low-key but effective. In discussion, almost all students say that behaviour in and out of lessons is much better

than at the beginning of the academic year and that more engaging lessons have contributed positively to this. They say that most staff use the behaviour code well to ensure that lessons proceed smoothly and without interruption, including where lessons are taken by temporary or cover staff. However, inconsistencies in the application of the behaviour code result in a slower pace of learning in a few lessons because of the inattentive behaviour of a small minority of students. In addition, in some lessons, the late arrival of a few students leads to lost learning time. Students confirmed that this poor punctuality, particularly after break and lunchtime, does hinder the start of some lessons.

Pastoral leaders play an important role, including through the use of 'student panels', in improving behaviour and in providing a link between students and their parents and carers. Although the behaviour of a very small minority of students, mainly boys, provides a significant challenge to staff, the school has continued to develop effective systems to manage the behaviour of those students who require support. School managers record and analyse data in relation to the number of referrals to the inclusion and on-call facilities within school. However, the school is in the early stages of using this information to target support more proactively for staff and, as a result, the number of referrals to the on-call facility remains high. In addition, a large proportion of those students who are referred to this facility and to the inclusion centre have special educational needs. The school has not evaluated fully the reasons for this disproportionately high rate of referral. A similar pattern is evident in the number of fixed-term exclusions from school. Although the overall number is low in comparison with national averages, students with special educational needs are again over-represented.

Students say that bullying is rare. They learn about different forms of bullying through the curriculum and in assemblies and are encouraged to play an active role in reducing the number of instances of bullying in school. As a result, all groups of students say they feel very safe in school. Attendance remains above average and continues to improve, including across different groups of students. Although levels of persistent absence have risen slightly over the course of this academic year, it remains below the national average.

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

- implement as a matter of urgency, a concerted and whole-school programme to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school, so that learning can proceed effectively for all students – satisfactory

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The governing body, and leaders and managers in school continue to provide a clear direction for further improvement that is widely shared by staff. Structures to enable a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation have been established and there is evidence that effective self-evaluation is leading to a series of well-targeted actions and interventions. The senior team has worked with determination to address those aspects that have been barriers to further improvement. However, although a range of support is

provided for middle leaders to carry out their roles, there remains variation in their effectiveness to drive improvement more rapidly in their areas of responsibility.

There is now much greater reliability in the assessment information used to monitor students' progress across the school, particularly in Key Stage 4. This is because senior leaders have ensured that more rigorous approaches to assessment are used consistently across the school. Customised professional development workshops and coaching, coordinated by senior leaders, the local authority and colleagues from partner schools, are providing useful support for the development of teaching and learning across the school. The monitoring and evaluation of provision are systematic and increasingly robust. Leaders at all levels are becoming more confident in recognising the impact of teaching on learning, although a comprehensive programme of lesson observation, involving all senior leaders, is not fully in place. As a result, although the school's records show those qualitative aspects of teaching that are the focus for development, there is not an up-to-date summative record through which improvement can be measured. Nevertheless, the school's strategy for monitoring teaching has recently been refocused. Each teacher has an individualised learning plan which records those aspects of their practice where support is needed and provision is identified to provide support for these aspects. However, although the rigour of this process is monitored by senior managers, this approach is not fully embedded and has not gained sufficient momentum to drive improvements to teaching more rapidly. In addition, although systems for the regular scrutiny of students' work are in place, more attention is given in this process to the quality and frequency of marking, for example, than is given to the evaluation of the impact of teaching over the longer term.

The parent forum, held every month, provides a useful route by which parents and carers can share their views on aspects of the school's work. This forum is increasingly responsive to the requests of parents and carers for aspects to be considered. Similarly, the work of the governing body is increasingly influential. In particular, the role of the link governor to subject departments is effective in raising the profile of governors in school, in increasing their first-hand involvement and in identifying those aspects of provision that can be shared more widely. As a result of a programme of training and support for governors they are more confident in providing support and challenge for school leaders and for holding the school to account for progress against the strategic improvement plan.

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

- improve the strategic leadership of the college – satisfactory

External support

The focus of external support for the school has shifted from supporting the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision to building greater capacity within school to continue improvement. While the school remains reliant on additional capacity provided by colleagues from two partner schools and on support provided by local authority advisers and consultants, good partnership-working means that senior and middle leaders are increasingly taking a greater role in, and responsibility for, driving improvement.