

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



22 November 2012

Mrs Angela Noble
Headteacher
The Galsworthy School
Galsworthy Road
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE34 9UG

Dear Mrs Noble

Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Galsworthy School

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 November 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 February 2012. 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 – good

Newly Qualified Teachers should not 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 Corporate Director Children, Adults and Families for South Tyneside.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven

Additional Inspector

January 2012



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Improve attendance by:
 - ensuring that the rewards for good attendance closely match students' interests and so are really valued by them
 - increasing the range of good quality alternative provision available and opportunities for education other than at the main site to engage more students in learning
 - establishing better partnerships with parents and carers before students join the school to ensure attendance targets are agreed
 - ensuring students, parents and carers are fully aware of the consequences of persistent absence and when targets are not met robust action is taken
 - enhancing extra-curricular activities so that they become an entitlement for all, rather than a reward for a minority.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that is consistently good in order to raise achievement, especially in English and mathematics by:
 - making targets for individual students more challenging and applying them in all subjects and lessons
 - developing the role of the subject leaders to ensure that literacy and numeracy are monitored, supported and promoted across all areas of the curriculum
 - extending the use of information and communication technology and independent learning so that students are more able to learn in situations outside traditional classroom settings
 - introducing a phonics-based approach to teaching literacy as soon as possible.

- Improve behaviour by:
 - ensuring that literacy and numeracy difficulties do not cause students to become frustrated and misbehave in lessons
 - establishing better transition arrangements with mainstream schools and the student referral unit, to ensure expectations of behaviour are known and previously successful strategies for support are in place
 - ensuring staff use the process of statutory assessment of special educational needs more effectively to gain advice on how extreme behaviour can be managed and prevented.

- Improve leadership by:
 - ensuring plans and self-evaluation documents always contain measurable targets and strategies to raise achievement for groups and individuals
 - ensuring that a simple and effective tracking system is put in place to monitor and improve academic achievement
 - establishing a mission for the school that is clear to all leaders and matches that of the behaviour and improvement partnership.

Special measures: monitoring of The Galsworthy School

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

Evidence

The inspector observed the work of the school and observed eight lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. The school's self-evaluation and planning documentation was examined. He met with a group of students, various members of staff including subject leaders for English and mathematics, senior managers, two representatives of the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. Visits were made to the site of the new school and to a provider of alternative vocational education being used by the school.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection a permanent headteacher has been appointed. The deputy headteacher who was acting headteacher at the time of the first monitoring inspection is absent from school. The associate headteacher who was working with the school at the time of the first monitoring inspection is no longer doing so but the local authority has commissioned the support of another associate headteacher who is working with the school on a part-time basis. The headteacher officially took up post on 1 November 2012. However, the local authority paved the way for her to work at the school for two and a half days a week for the first half of the autumn term, with the new associate headteacher leading and managing the school for the other half of the week. With 20 Year 11 students leaving the school at the end of the summer term 2012 there are now 29 students on roll. The school is on track to move into new buildings for the start of the spring term 2013. The Department for Education (DfE) has held recent discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and a representative from the local authority about the school moving to academy status. The governing body is to discuss this further at a forthcoming meeting.

Achievement of students at the school

There are signs that students' rates of progress are improving in line with better quality teaching and improved attendance. In the lessons observed, almost all students were attentive to their work, although not many were perky and enthused. In the majority of lessons, they remained on task throughout and there was only a rare occurrence of a student leaving a lesson without permission. In some of the lessons, students were keen to ask questions and make positive contributions. Where the lessons had a series of activities other than a good deal of listening, the students made better progress. In art and physical education, for example, they made good progress because they were interested, could see they were succeeding and, consequently, applied themselves well.

The school has made good in-roads into forming a system of recording students' progress in all subjects and the first round of teachers' assessments has been made. Senior staff recognise that external moderation and validation of teachers' assessments are necessary to

assure the accuracy of the assessments fully and this is in hand. The system has already been used to set students challenging targets for improvement. The majority of students in Year 11 have targets that match the national expectations for progress. Others have targets that have raised expectations but remain suitably realistic, for example, for those few students who have disengaged from the school and whose attendance has not been strong. The data from the early assessments are being evaluated effectively to check on how well different groups of students are doing and to compare students' progress in different subjects.

The 2012 GCSE examination results showed that the number of students gaining A* to G grades increased in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) but not in English. The school's better-informed predictions for 2013 suggest that English and mathematics results will improve. Of the 20 students who left the school in 2012, 18 are in employment, education or training and there are personal and family reasons why the other two students are not. The school's recent telephone survey of 10 parents found that they were positive about the progress their children were making.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving and is beginning to bear fruit in getting students to apply themselves more fully to their learning and increasing their rates of progress. Improvement has been notable in teachers' use of assessment information to plan work at a level that better suits students' needs; this includes information from the half-termly assessments of students' reading. However, there is still a need to plan more precise and measurable learning objectives for individual students so that they know what and how much they are expected learn over the course of the lesson.

In the majority of lessons observed during the monitoring inspection teaching was good. The strengths seen include positive relationships between students and staff, teachers' effective use of other adults to support and guide students, consistent and non-confrontational behaviour management and the regular and interesting use of ICT. All of these helped students to engage with their learning and stick to the task in hand. Typically in less strong lessons there was a lack of urgency and imperative for learning conveyed by the teacher.

The quality of marking and the feedback students get about how to make their work better have improved. The agreed system is mostly consistently applied but teachers do not always check later to ensure students respond to the guidance they have been given. There have been advances in getting all teachers to contribute to students' development of literacy and numeracy. Staff have benefited from their links with colleagues from the Harton Teaching Alliance. For example, subject leaders have been guided to do audits of literacy and numeracy in their subjects and in adjusting their long-term plans. Short-term planning almost invariably includes reference to literacy and numeracy. Nonetheless, teachers too often only fleetingly dwell on literacy and numeracy opportunities that arise when more attention to these areas would be of great benefit to the students. The school has formed a teaching and learning group led by the English and mathematics leaders. This has been useful in improving planning and marking. These subject leaders have built on the training

teachers have been given about how to apply literacy and numeracy in all subjects by scrutinising planning but are yet to observe lessons so they can more fully influence their colleagues' practices.

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that is consistently good in order to raise achievement, especially in English and mathematics – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of students

The behaviour of students is much improved. This is a result of the good strides forward taken by staff in putting suitable systems in place and in making the culture of the school more focused on learning rather than behaviour. Staff had received beneficial training on managing behaviour and taking the heat out of situations. This was applied well during the monitoring inspection in the few instances where behaviour could have become more problematic. Staff are consistent in these approaches. A recent development has been the introduction of a 're-engagement room' where students are accommodated if they need to leave a lesson. This is proving successful in turning students around quickly and minimising any disruptions to lessons. The staff now discuss problematic students at a weekly meeting where they are focused on solutions; they have a range of strategies, including gaining outside support to meet students' behaviour needs better. Mentors have been allocated to each student and students know this person is looking out for them. Mentors have at least weekly contact with their parents.

The school's data related to behaviour confirm it is much improved. The number of occasions students walk out of lessons has been dramatically reduced. The school's records show that incidents of a serious nature have dropped from 164 in 2011/12 to 15 this year to date. Fixed-term exclusions are down from 71 in 2011/12 to six this term. The number of points being earned for good behaviour is rising. The students who met with the inspector say behaviour has improved since the arrival of the new headteacher, citing staff's more positive attitudes to them and clearer rewards and sanctions as being the reasons. Parents in the school's telephone survey are also positive about behaviour. Two of the students typified others' views when they said 'They don't kick us out they now want to help us' and 'My Mam thinks it's a lot better.' They say they feel safe and that bullying seldom rears its head. The behaviour seen in lessons during the monitoring inspection was mainly good, although students' attitudes to learning were not always as strong.

There has been a marked improvement in students' attendance. It has increased by 23% this term to date and on the first day of the monitoring inspection it was close to the national average for secondary schools and above the average for special schools. The increased rate in attendance is not due to poor attenders leaving school, despite 20 leaving school last summer. Of the 22 students at the school now and who were on roll in the summer term, 17 have improved their attendance this term, by an average of 14 percentage points. The percentage of students who are absent more than 15% of the time has reduced considerably from 65% in 2011 to 9% this term.

The reasons for these improvements are very clear to the students. Foremost they say the new headteacher has made very positive changes, not least to the climate of the school, which demonstrates to them that staff care for them and set fair and clear boundaries. The fact that they are all transported to school by staff using the school's own transport is playing its part and certainly ensures punctuality. This also has benefits in forming closer relationships with parents because informal communication is on a daily basis. The students who are improving and maintaining good attendance have been given rewards that are meaningful to them. Mentors for each student are focusing on the importance of coming to school with good effect. Finally, there have been beneficial moves forward to matching alternative vocational placements to students, including some who have been hard to reach in the past.

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

- improve behaviour – good
- improve attendance – good

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Much of the ground that was lost between the February 2012 inspection and the July 2012 monitoring inspection has been recovered. Primarily, this is because of the excellent work of the new headteacher. In a short time, ably supported by the associate headteacher, she has not only put effective systems in place but has positively influenced the staffs' attitudes and minds. Expectations are high and focused on improvement and high quality outcomes for students. Staff are on board and they have high regard for the headteacher. They are no longer spending time trying to explain why things are as they are but are focused on implementing solutions. Improvement is already very evident, particularly with regard to attendance and behaviour and, to a lesser degree, teaching and achievement.

The use of data about the achievements of students is much improved. A cycle of analysis-evaluation-action-review is becoming more common practice. The school's self-evaluation and school development plans are good examples. The self-evaluation is a realistic appraisal of the school's current performance. Actions from this lead into the school development plan. This contains measureable targets, including those for students' achievement. It is a working document that is changed as the school's priorities alter. It is regularly monitored and shared with the governing body and staff. Targets for the proportion of teaching that should be good or better are not yet included in the development plan, principally because not enough rounds of lesson observations have taken place. A calendar of monitoring events helps staff know what is required and when. The governing body is becoming fully informed about key aspects of the school and governors are increasingly finding themselves positioned to hold the school to account.

Some senior leaders have formally observed lessons and these, alongside those undertaken by the local authority, give the senior leaders a reasonable view of the quality of teaching but not yet a view of how it is improving over time. Further observations will plug this gap. Other leaders are picking up the gauntlet and are following the headteacher's lead in driving improvement. The work of the leaders of English and mathematics in having all staff focus on literacy and numeracy is a good example. The school's survey of some parents' views

suggests they are pleased with the way the school is improving. A more fulsome survey would serve the school well.

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

- improve leadership – good

External support

The local authority acted quickly and decisively following the first monitoring inspection. They assisted the governors in the appointment of an experienced headteacher and arranged her part-time release from commitments with another local authority, enabling her to work at the school from the beginning of the autumn term. The commissioning of an experienced associate headteacher who has worked in harmony with the headteacher has been very beneficial. Because of the local authority's decisiveness, some of the lost ground has been recovered. The school's link with Harton Teaching Alliance, which was initiated by the local authority, has been useful and valued by the staff. The local authority's termly reviews of the school are helping staff keep focused on the areas for improvement and are giving the headteacher a regular objective view of progress. The Chair of the Governing Body has valued the local authority's attendance at governing body meetings and in her discussions with the DfE about academy status. Its work in helping plan a smooth transition to the new buildings has been equally well valued. In addition to external support from within the local authority, the headteacher has arranged for liaison with outstanding special schools from outside of the local authority. This is helping to raise expectations.