

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 566 939
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: glaw@cfbt.com



7 December 2012

Mr W Jordon
Interim Executive Principal
North Shore Academy
Junction Road
Stockton-on-Tees
Cleveland
TS19 9LT

Dear Mr Jordon

Special measures: monitoring inspection of North Shore Academy

Following my visit with Michael Wardle, Additional Inspector, to your school on 5 and 6 December 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 academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 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 – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers may 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 Director of Children's Services for Stockton-on-Tees.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Briggs
Lead Inspector

January 2012



Annex

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

- Improve students' behaviour and the impact this has on learning by:
 - enabling teachers to take a consistent and suitably robust approach to improving discipline
 - introducing an effective strategy for behaviour management
 - ensuring that the work of the internal exclusion unit has a successful and sustained impact on students' attitudes to learning.

- Improve students' attendance by:
 - analysing the reasons for poor attendance and evaluating whether academy policies are being implemented robustly
 - analysing students' views about their enjoyment and engagement in lessons and the impact of their experiences on attendance and punctuality
 - taking more robust action to ensure persistent absence is reduced.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - building upon the successful curriculum initiatives in Key Stage 3 to enable more students to enjoy lessons
 - giving teachers more time to share good practice
 - ensuring that teachers plan and deliver learning activities effectively so that they meet the needs and interests of different groups of students, especially those who have specific weaknesses in their literacy skills
 - further reducing the proportion of lessons taught by supply or temporary staff.

- Develop the academy's capacity to improve by:
 - ensuring that the governing body and trustees challenge the performance of leaders more robustly
 - establishing a more cohesive and effective leadership team with clearly-identified roles, responsibilities and performance targets that have direct links to outcomes for students
 - building upon the improvements made to the quality of middle leadership to devise a more effective curriculum at Key Stage 4
 - identifying a new lead trustee so that the long-term future of the academy is assured.

Special measures: monitoring of North Shore Academy

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 December 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Interim Executive Principal, vice principal, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the academy sponsor and other key staff. Formal and informal discussions were also held with students. Inspectors observed 25 lessons; some observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Students' conduct was observed around the academy and at break times.

Inspectors also scrutinised the academy's records for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff and checked that the academy is meeting statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection there has been a significant change to the staffing of the academy. There has been a reduction from 52 to 42 full-time-equivalent teachers. A new deputy vice principal has been appointed to lead on data and the curriculum. An assistant principal with responsibility for literacy started this term and has also assumed leadership for English in the absence of the head of department who is on maternity leave. A new head of mathematics and two other mathematics teachers also took up post in September. Ministers approved the appointment of Northern Education Trust as the new sponsor from 1 September 2012. A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed by the sponsor.

Achievement of students at the academy

The academy's data and examination results show that the academic outcomes for students in 2012 were worse than in 2011. This did not come as a surprise to the leadership team who had accurately predicted that the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, would be 22%, as indeed it was. The academy's own analysis shows that the gap between the progress of the highest-ability students and that of other groups remains too wide. The proportion of students that made expected progress in English and mathematics was significantly lower than national figures. For the second year running, the proportion of students making more than expected (good) progress was exceptionally small. Unsurprisingly, the academy did not meet the government floor standard by some significant margin. Predictions for 2013 suggest an increase, but outcomes are expected to remain significantly below national figures on nearly all measures.

In lessons, students' achievement is showing some improvement but remains variable. Progress was judged to be good or better in just under a third of observations. It is stronger

in the lessons where teachers give a clear focus on students' expected progress and then evaluate the progress students have made. Although reducing, there are still too many lessons in which students make inadequate progress. One of the biggest barriers to progress is students' extremely low literacy levels. Disabled students and those with special educational needs continue to receive better quality support, but still struggle to keep up with others.

The quality of teaching

There is no doubt that the overall quality of teaching is beginning to improve. The vice principal has empowered a strong team to lead on improving teaching and it is having a positive impact on a large number of teachers who struggle to deliver consistently good lessons. A greater focus has been given to ensuring that progress is at the heart of every lesson and teachers and students alike have a better grasp of what good progress looks like. However, there is much work to be done before the new strategies are fully effective. On this monitoring inspection, inspectors observed less inadequate teaching and more examples of some strong teaching, but there is still too much teaching that is inadequate and there is a need for more direct action to improve this situation. Hardly any lessons are taught by supply teachers and this is helping to establish greater consistency. Students spoken with say that lessons are still improving, but they were less positive about the quality of humanities lessons. Teachers are still underestimating how capable some students are. Expectations of what students can achieve are still low in some lessons. Students do not learn quickly enough and some teachers are too quick to give answers rather than insisting that the students work answers out for themselves.

There continues to be an appropriate focus on students' progress in lessons and planning for this is becoming more consistent. More teachers are giving a clearer focus to improving literacy within their lessons but some opportunities are still missed for developing reading and writing skills in other subjects, such as geography.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching – satisfactory

Behaviour and safety of students

Staff and students believe that behaviour is continuing to improve. Inspectors agree that behaviour around the academy at lesson change and break times is better than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. However, students' attitudes to learning within lessons have not improved as noticeably since the June monitoring inspection. A small minority of students are reluctant learners, even when teaching is of a good quality. Leaders are aware of this and are focusing their efforts on ensuring that students are engaged in their learning in every lesson. There remains a need for students to improve their listening skills and the contribution they make during lessons. Students say that the academy is now a safe place to be and that bullying has reduced even further. They are confident that incidents of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, are dealt with more swiftly and effectively than before. The

number of students removed from lessons for misbehaviour each day has dropped and the proportion of students sent to the internal exclusion unit is declining. Consequently, the number of exclusions is continuing to reduce.

Attendance continues to improve. Analysis of attendance is more systematic and rigorous and as a result of a wide range of initiatives, attendance for most groups of students has improved well since the last monitoring inspection. Attendance figures during this inspection were nearly four percentage points higher than in June. The attendance of disabled students and those with special educational needs has seen a dramatic increase. The core of students who are persistently absent is beginning to decrease but remains worryingly high. Punctuality to lessons is improving but is still an issue. Despite constant chivvyng by staff, students do not show a sufficient sense of urgency when moving to and between lessons.

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

- Improve students' behaviour and the impact this has on learning – good
- Improve students' attendance – good

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

There remains a clear vision for improvement that is permeating deeper within the academy. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the need for greater rigour and accountability in order to raise everybody's game. For example, expectations of teachers in relation to the setting and marking of homework have been raised. Unfortunately, this is not replicated fully at middle leadership level. Roles have been clarified and middle leaders believe that they are held more to account, but in reality there are still some aspects of leadership that are not improving as rapidly as they need to. Subject leaders do not challenge weak teaching in their departments strongly enough. Monitoring systems are not tight enough and, as a result, some teachers are still getting away with lacklustre teaching. A key concern is that not all middle leaders model the best quality of teaching.

The governing body is already benefitting from the vast experience of the new chair. However, it is too soon to see sufficient impact of any new initiatives. Governors have a better grasp of what questions to ask and are making their presence felt more around the academy. They have received training and been provided with a 'tool-kit' to help them to perform their role more effectively. There has been significant improvement in building better links with parents and partner primary schools.

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

- Develop the academy's capacity to improve – satisfactory

External support

The quality and impact of the external support, provided by the new sponsor, Northern Education Trust, is appropriately targeted and having a positive impact. The impartiality of the quality assurance of the effectiveness of the support provided is not particularly clear.