

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 566863
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jbennett@cfbt.com



8 March 2013

Mr Piers Tolson
Headteacher
Wellfield Business & Enterprise College
Yewlands Drive
Leyland
Lancashire
PR25 2TP

Dear Mr Tolson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wellfield Business & Enterprise College

Following my visit with Mary Liptrot, Additional Inspector, to the school on 6 and 7 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 & Young People for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that the proportion of students leaving with five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics at least meets or exceeds the national average by:
 - creating a rigorous and robust monitoring system which raises teachers' expectations of all students' capabilities and ensures that targets provide sufficient levels of challenge regardless of students' abilities, backgrounds or starting points
 - enabling all staff to use assessment information precisely to match work to meet individual students' needs
 - increasing opportunities for well-planned, independent learning in lessons and devising clear assessment procedures so that accurate and more frequent assessment is used to accelerate students' progress
 - ensuring that the curriculum meets students' needs more effectively and supports them to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Improve behaviour and prevent bullying by:
 - creating a clear and effective set of procedures for managing behaviour and ensuring that they are understood by all staff and students
 - consistently and fairly applying the school's procedures for managing behaviour and preventing bullying
 - encouraging all students to develop a positive approach to the learning opportunities that teachers provide
 - increasing supervision around the school site at break and lunchtimes.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - strengthening the accountability of middle leaders for securing good or better teaching in their areas, ensuring that there are rigorous procedures to monitor, evaluate and review the quality of provision and its impact on progress
 - creating robust processes for self-evaluation involving a range of stakeholders
 - developing a succinct school development plan with specific, measurable and time-bound targets to help drive improvement quickly and securely
 - using performance management effectively to support improvements in teaching and learning in order to raise achievement.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 03 and 7 March 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work. They observed 15 part lessons, taught by 15 different teachers. Two of these part lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the school's most up-to-date progress data for students, records of students' behaviour and the minutes of the standards and effectiveness committee of the governing body. They met with senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, a group of teachers, two groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection a new subject leader for science has been appointed and is now working at the school. A subject leader for technology, a subject leader for art and a teacher of technology have also been appointed and are due to take up their posts at the start of the summer term. Currently, there are five teachers working on temporary contracts; covering the timetables of teachers who have left the school or who are absent for other reasons. The school plans to become a sponsored academy in September 2013.

Achievement of students at the college

The achievement of most groups of students continues to improve as a consequence of better teaching. The early entry GCSE mathematics results for current Year 11 students are much better than the results for this subject in 2012; the proportion of students who gained A* to C grades having risen by 12%. These students are already making better progress across a range of subjects than their peers from the previous year.

The gaps in performance between students known to be entitled to free school meals, students who require extra help with their learning and other students in the school are narrowing. However, the school's current data indicate that in Year 11 boys' attainment is better than that of the girls.

The school's tracking data for students in Year 9 are also encouraging with most groups of students making the progress expected of them in English and mathematics.

Senior leaders' rigorous and regular checking of students' progress data, particularly in Year 11, enables them to identify quickly those students who are underperforming and provide extra help to get them back on track; for example, lunchtime and after school tutorial sessions, revision classes and one to one mentoring.

The quality of teaching

Senior leaders recognise that focusing on improving teaching is a key priority and is crucial to speeding up students' progress so that they achieve at least in line with national expectations. Since the previous monitoring inspection teachers have undergone a structured programme of training leading to improvements in classroom practice.

Consequently, the majority of teaching observed by inspectors was at least good with some examples of outstanding practice; however, some teaching still requires improvement. A number of teachers have left the school and until the newly appointed staff take up their appointments the governors, understandably, have had to employ some temporary teachers. These appointments are relatively recent; however, the quality of the teaching of a number of these temporary colleagues requires the most improvement. Senior leaders recognise this and are providing appropriate support.

In the best lessons teachers' planning and organisation enable students to take more responsibility for their learning; with students being given opportunities to work cooperatively, helping each other answer questions and solve problems. Inspectors witnessed students working in this way in the majority of lessons. For example, in one outstanding geography lesson the students worked in teams of four to research the effect of opening a factory in a developing country. The four students in each team took responsibility for finding out about one aspect of the topic. They then shared their ideas firstly within the team and then with the rest of the class. The students made outstanding progress because they were able to learn from each other. They enjoyed sharing ideas and helping their peers gain a secure understanding of this complex subject. When asked, students say they like this way of working as it allows them to work independently and find things out for themselves. Students also said that in the best lessons teachers plan activities that take into account the different ways they learn.

In those lessons where teaching requires improvement teachers have yet to get the balance right between the time they spend talking and the time they give students to do the work. Often a 'one size fits all' approach is adopted with all students doing the same activity. For some students the work is too easy and for others too hard, consequently, the learning of these students slows.

Marking of students' work varies in quality. In the best examples teachers strike a good balance between praising students and giving advice on how the work could be improved. There are also good examples of students being given the responsibility for judging the quality of each other's work. However, this practice is not consistent and some marking is unhelpful.

Behaviour and safety of students

As at the previous monitoring inspection behaviour around the school and in lessons is consistently good. Most students demonstrate positive attitudes to learning; they work hard and try their best. The school has undertaken a thorough analysis of the impact of the behaviour policy that senior leaders introduced in September 2012. The data shows that since the previous monitoring inspection incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying and disruptive behaviour, have continued to fall. When asked students say that behaviour continues to improve and the new policy has helped them take more responsibility for their conduct; their teachers agree.

Attendance is currently above average and the school's drive to improve punctuality has seen a significant reduction in the numbers of students arriving late in the morning. The high level of staff supervision at changes of lesson, break and lunchtimes contributes to students saying that they feel safe.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

In their continual drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning senior leaders have introduced a system for teachers to share good practice. This system allows teachers to work in small groups so that they can learn from and support each other as they try out new ideas in the classroom. The ideas generated by these small groups are published in the teaching and learning newsletter.

With the support of the local authority's teaching and learning consultant the school has organised training for teachers to help improve their classroom practice and speed up the progress that students make. This training has included effective group work in lessons, improving students' literacy in all subjects and effective marking. However, this training has yet to change the practice of some teachers. As a result, some teaching still requires improvement and marking is variable in quality.

Senior leaders have established a robust programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers who are identified as requiring improvement are targeted for support and additional training. This may include observing the good practice of another teacher in the school or mentoring from a senior leader or teaching and learning consultant.

Senior leaders are clear that maximising the opportunities for students to develop their reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematical skills in all subjects is essential if students are to achieve well. Consequently, the governors have appointed a literacy coordinator and a numeracy coordinator to lead developments in these areas of the curriculum. However, these appointments are relatively recent and it is too early to assess the impact of their work on students' achievement.

Middle leaders are now taking much greater responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in their departments and the standards achieved by students. They now check more effectively on the consistency of teaching; giving feedback and guidance to staff and identifying their strengths and areas for development.

Concerns, raised at the previous monitoring inspection, about the accuracy of the data collected on students' progress continue to be addressed. The checking of students' progress, particularly in Year 11, is now more robust. It allows senior leaders and governors to assess confidently the progress the school is making towards achieving its end of Key Stage 4 achievement targets. However, the system for analysing the information on students' progress at Key Stage 3 and in Year 10 is underdeveloped.

Senior and middle leaders have received training in the school's new performance management arrangements so that they are able to carry out their responsibilities as line managers effectively. The performance management targets for all teachers ensure that they are accountable for the quality of their teaching, the progress made by their students and students' behaviour. However, interim meetings to enable line managers to check the progress colleagues are making towards achieving their targets have yet to take place.

Members of the governors' standards and effectiveness committee, who are responsible for monitoring the progress of the school development plan, demonstrate a good understanding of the measures being taken to improve the school. This committee, led by the Chair of the Governing Body, provides the senior leaders with an appropriate balance of support and challenge.

The governing body is managing the school's application to become a sponsored academy in September 2013. Governors have already consulted staff and parents, as they are required to do, and are currently in the process of selecting a suitable sponsor.

External support

Leaders, managers and governors have valued the effective support provided by the local authority. In particular, they have appreciated the involvement of consultants who have worked with school staff to help them address the areas for improvement identified when the school was inspected in June 2012. As the school's new policies and systems have become established, the level of this support has been reduced. However, the school will continue to work in partnership with another school to develop the school's assessment practices further. In addition two consultants, currently providing support for senior leaders, will continue to work at the school until the start of the summer term.