

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



15 March 2013

Dr Christopher Meehan
Headteacher
St Cuthbert's RC Business and Enterprise College
Shaw Road
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL16 4RX

Dear Dr Meehan

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Cuthbert's RC Business and Enterprise College

Following my visit to your school on 14 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, other senior leaders, the Chair and two members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a group of students. I scrutinised the school action plan as well as other key documentation. You accompanied me on a series of brief visits to lessons.

Context

Since the previous inspection the school has made five new appointments to mathematics, including a new head of department, who will join the senior leadership team. She will take up her post in May, along with another teacher. The other three will start in September 2013.

Main findings

Where teaching is inadequate, leaders have wasted no time in taking swift and decisive action. A programme of formal monitoring and peer coaching of staff whose teaching is judged to be less than good has resulted in an increase in the quality of teaching across the school. The learning and teaching group provides bespoke weekly training focused on improving classroom practice but this has not had time to have an impact across all lessons.

Senior leaders have produced an action plan to address the improvements highlighted in the last inspection. This covers all of the appropriate areas but does not focus precisely enough on what needs to happen to bring about rapid improvement. It is also not clear how the impact of actions taken will be checked in the short term.

You have prioritised raising students' achievement in mathematics and have been proactive in securing five new members of staff to this department, including a new head of department with a proven track record of leading improvement in schools. Activities to help students catch up and revision sessions are very much appreciated by students, particularly those in Year 11. A special educational needs coordinator has been appointed but it is too soon to establish the impact of her work on the progress made by students supported through school action plus or those with statements of special educational needs.

The new system for tracking students' progress is embedded across the school. However, the process for setting individual student targets has some weaknesses. The system is not being used effectively to forecast how students will perform at the end of each key stage.

The governing body has supported some of the tough decisions that have had to be made, in particular where these have related to staffing issues. Governors are able to challenge leaders more robustly because they now receive better quality data which gives them a more accurate view of students' achievement.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- sharpen the school action plan so that leaders can measure and evaluate the impact of their actions at regular intervals
- refine the systems for tracking students' progress.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school receives strong and effective support from the local authority. The senior school improvement partner has brokered a link with a nearby teaching school. Through this link, you are being supported by a National Leader in Education and senior leaders are being coached by leaders in the teaching school. The local authority is also brokering training for governors. This support is very much valued by leaders and governors.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rochdale and as below.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled school
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.