

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566933
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: ggleaden@cfbt.com

16 May 2013

Mrs C Walker
Principal
Wybers Wood Academy
Timberley Drive
Grimsby
Lincolnshire
DN37 9QZ

Dear Mrs Walker

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Wybers Wood Academy

Following my visit with John Young and Helen Lane, Her Majesty's Inspectors, to your academy on 9 and 10 May, 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 a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, other senior leaders, groups of pupils, parents and representatives of the interim executive board of governors and the sponsor. Inspectors observed 18 lessons, five of which were joint observations with academy leaders.

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

the academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

Context

The academy opened on 1 December 2012 and the Principal took over from the interim headteacher in January 2013. All staff from the predecessor school transferred to the academy. One teacher is absent on maternity leave and a temporary teacher fills her role. The academy is fully staffed.

The academy is larger than the average primary school and has 382 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and who attract pupil premium funding, is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage; a few pupils from different ethnic groups attend the school. The proportion of pupils with home languages other than English is well below average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is broadly average but the number supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

The academy is sponsored by the School Partnership Trust Academies.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

On entry to the school, children broadly meet expectations for their age, although many are weaker in reading. Strong teaching of the sounds and letters that support reading are evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Children are responding enthusiastically and are using the strategies they are taught to read confidently. Staff are beginning to use assessment information securely: steps are in place to verify its accuracy and challenging targets are shared with pupils across all year groups. Achievement is beginning to accelerate, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 1 and in Years 5 and 6, as a result of settled staffing. More pupils are working at Level 5 and above in mathematics and in English. This is a significant improvement on standards achieved in previous years in the predecessor school. However, assessments also show that gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils remain particularly in Key Stage 2, for example, boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs do not achieve as well as other pupils in the academy.

The academy's leaders are taking urgent action to tackle the inconsistencies in teaching that led to underachievement. Pupils who need additional support to help them catch up, particularly in writing and mathematics are starting to receive it. Pupils' progress in lessons reflects improvements in teaching quality. Pupils are working hard to make up ground particularly in their writing, for example, Year 2 pupils try hard to form their letters and are beginning to know tricky words and but this is not always followed through in spelling.

The quality of teaching

An effective, strategic lead teacher is driving improvement in teaching. A better profile of teaching is evolving across the academy due to the support and coaching provided for all staff and careful monitoring by senior leaders. In joint lesson observations with inspectors, senior leaders identified the same strengths and weaknesses and agreed about the quality of teaching. Inspectors saw many examples of good practice but they also saw lessons in which teaching and learning were inadequate. Grouping pupils by ability and focused teaching in English and

mathematics are being introduced. Strong teamwork and consistent practice in teaching these basic skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in upper Key Stage 2 classes are starting to emerge.

In the best lessons observed by inspectors, activities were carefully structured to arouse pupils' curiosity and tasks were tailored to individuals, pairs and groups of pupils to provide a good degree of challenge. Pupils were actively involved in learning and made swift progress because teachers regularly checked their understanding, explaining concepts and amending work to ensure it was not too easy or difficult. In weaker lessons tasks lacked challenge, timely explanations or demonstrations. Pupils were not always clear about the quality and quantity of work that was expected of them and in particular, pupils with special educational needs, made slower progress. Despite some examples of highly effective questioning the work of teaching assistants varied and opportunities were missed to use them effectively throughout lessons to maintain a rigorous focus on learning.

Most pupils are responding to the Principal's exhortation to 'try their best' and are taking pride in the presentation of their work. Good examples of marking and feedback to pupils also encouraged this but it is not consistent across all classes.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Attendance and punctuality since the academy opened have continued to improve and reflects parents' views that their children are settled and happy. Most pupils are engaged and keen to learn and there is a calm learning atmosphere in lessons. Inspectors saw little evidence of poor behaviour but the academy's behaviour logs show that there is still an issue with high rates, particularly at social times. This is due to a small group of pupils who are taking longer to respond to the actions and expectations that the academy has of them. Generally, pupils say they feel safe and know to report any worries to teachers. Pupils are starting to show respect to each other and the youngest pupils know and give examples of what being kind means.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The Principal provides clear direction for staff and, with the support of the sponsor, a seamless transfer in leadership from the academy's interim headteacher has taken place. An ambitious vision for the academy is shared by leaders, governors and staff. They are quickly creating an ethos where pupils are developing resilience. Improvement plans are firmly focused on promoting high achievement and establishing systems for reviewing the school's work. Senior leaders have a good grasp of strengths and weaknesses and their capacity to drive improvement is developing swiftly. Their regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in key subjects are thorough. Some middle leaders are challenging progress and developing teaching in the subjects they are responsible for but this is not consistent across the academy. The Principal's decisions to modify the curriculum

place greater emphasis on using visits, visitors and work with partners to support pupils' learning. This is beginning to make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

The interim executive board initially provided more support than challenge to the Principal as they adjusted to understand their new responsibilities. The board has disbanded but delays in the planned handover to a new governing body have resulted in insufficient challenge and support at a key time in the academy's development.

External support

The academy is making effective use of partnerships, for example, using experts at Healing Academy to support the teaching of Wybers Wood pupils who are working at high levels in mathematics. The sponsor makes a useful contribution to training, monitoring and evaluation and ensures that parents' views are beginning to inform decision making. However, the sponsor has been slow to act in developing governance and the handover to the new governing body.

Priorities for further improvement

- Bridge the gaps in the achievement of boys, pupils with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals and ensure they make good progress.
- Increase the effectiveness of support staff in lessons and ensure a consistent focus on pupils' learning.
- Ensure a consistent approach to marking and feedback so that all pupils receive good advice and guidance to help them understand how to improve.
- Reduce and eliminate poor behaviour by introducing strategies to modify, challenge and improve the behaviour of a small group of pupils.
- Ensure that the new governing body provides effective support and challenge to senior leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector