

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



14 May 2013

Mrs A New
Headteacher
St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise
Berrys Lane
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 3HE

Dear Mrs New

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise, St. Helens

Following my visit to your school on 13 May 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting principal, other senior leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Documents summarising other actions taken since the section 5 inspection were also scrutinised.

Context

Due to the sudden death of the former principal, a new acting principal and acting vice principal were appointed in February 2013. They will hold these positions until a permanent principal and deputy are appointed to take up post in August 2014.

Main findings

The acting principal and other senior leaders have produced a post inspection improvement plan that is tackling the key recommendations arising from the December inspection. Appropriate strategies are now in place to tackle underperformance in English and mathematics and among boys. Tracking and monitor systems better identify where interventions are required. Middle managers and classroom teachers are more adroit at using data to identify underperformance and plan lessons accordingly. Progress data for both key stages indicate that the gender gap between girls and boys is narrowing although it still remains significant in English. More work is required to improve achievement in English and mathematics. Students in mathematics are currently making better progress and most recent data and results from examinations already taken and marked indicate that key stage 4 results this year will be close to the national average. Progress in English is slower. Strategies introduced in Year 7 and 8 to improve reading ages are having an impact. However the need for further action to embed reading, writing, listening and oracy skills is recognised by senior leaders.

There has been a tightening of the internal lesson observation processes and support systems to improve teaching and learning. Best practice from the sciences and humanities is shared among all staff. Coaching and bespoke packages to improve identified subject areas and individual teachers requiring improvement are in place. The impact of such measures can be evidenced through an improving teaching grade profile and better student progress. Tracking, monitoring and a more forensic approach to the use of data to inform on student progress is being embedded. Governors have strengthened their understanding of student monitoring and tracking evidence and how well students are doing. They have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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:

- continue to strengthen the school's capacity to ensure more rapid and sustained improvement at both key stages. In particular continue actions to improve the progress that students make in English and mathematics.
- narrow the achievement gap between boys and girls by more focused strategies on improving the achievement and aspirations of boys. To do so identify more clearly the groups of boys who are underperforming and plan accordingly.
- ensure that middle leaders and teachers are adept in the use of data to set and monitor student progress targets and to intervene effectively when these are not met.
- work with external partners so as to further embed an improvement and aspirational school culture.

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

External support

The local authority is committed to supporting the school further in aiding its improvement planning and practice. The local authority has facilitated a local headteacher to mentor the acting principal; a relationship which is both very helpful and valued. Links have been established with other schools and educational institutions to explore best practice within the sector.

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

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The lead inspector.