

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

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566932  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:** hcarnall@cfbt.com



20 September 2013

Mr Des Herlihy  
Acting Principal  
Furness Academy  
Park Drive  
Barrow-in-Furness  
Cumbria  
LA13 9BB

Dear Mr Herlihy (Acting Principal)

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Furness Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 19 September 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the Interim Executive Principal, the sponsors, members of the governing body and the senior leadership team. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The local sponsor's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection the Principal has been suspended; an investigation is on-going. An Interim Executive Headteacher has been appointed. A total of 70 teaching and non-teaching staff left in July; many of these were planned redundancies. The school has moved from a split-site into a brand new building so for the first time in the academy's history all of the staff and students are under one roof.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Since the section 5 inspection the sponsors and members of the governing body have taken swift and decisive action to strengthen the senior leadership team. The Interim Executive Principal has engendered a culture of openness and collective responsibility amongst the

staff. There are strengths amongst the senior leadership team and senior leaders are working, at pace, to tackle the significant amount of day to day teaching that is not good enough.

A simplified way of managing behaviour has been introduced and all staff, including all non-teaching staff, have been trained accordingly. The system is based upon 3 simple rules displayed all around the school: three core values of firmness, fairness and dignity, and a principle that 'you are never far from an adult.' It is too early to measure the impact of these changes but staff spoken to by the inspector feel that there is a much more positive atmosphere in school.

The post-inspection action plan is being used to direct improvements for the coming term. It is thorough and has some clearly measurable outcomes. However, the plan should be sharpened by relating the impact of actions more directly to students' achievement.

The sponsors have drawn a clear boundary between their role and that of the governing body. This allows sponsors to hold senior leaders and governors to account more effectively. A number of new committees have been established to verify the quality of provision and outcomes for all students. One such committee will focus upon raising achievement and is chaired by an independent professional with extensive educational expertise. Sponsors and governors are represented on all of these committees so they have a first-hand understanding of what is going well and where progress towards an agreed action is insufficient.

Members of the governing body have not evaluated the impact of the pupil premium, government funds set aside to help schools support children of armed forces families, pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school lacks a clear strategy that determines how these funds can best be spent to ensure that the gap is closing between the achievement of students who are disadvantaged and those who are not.

The sponsor's statement of action is too general. Sponsors have not made explicitly clear to senior leaders and governors what 'sufficient progress' would look like throughout the coming year. Targets to measure attendance and behaviour are too broad and do not relate specifically enough to the groups of students who are the most disengaged. There are no clear criteria to measure improvements in teachers' performance targets, changes to the curriculum and the achievement of different groups.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The sponsor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The single central record meets requirements.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**