

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

T 0300 1231231  
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](mailto:hcarnall@cfbt.com)



30 September 2013

Mr Derek Cogle  
Headteacher  
Atkinson House School  
North Terrace  
Seghill  
Cramlington  
Northumberland  
NE23 7EB

Dear Mr Cogle

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Atkinson House School, Seghill, Northumberland**

Following my visit to your school on 27 September 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and with other senior leaders. In addition, HMI met with the subject leaders for literacy and numeracy, and with the attendance support officer. HMI also met with the school's improvement partner and with a representative from the local authority. Four new governors also attended the school to meet with HMI, who also looked at documentation including the school's updated action plan. HMI also observed parts of two lessons in Key Stage 3, as well as a meeting of the student support group.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to staff or the school's organisation since the previous monitoring inspection. Four new governors have been appointed to the governing body and one existing governor has stepped down. A new local authority school improvement officer has been appointed to support the school.

### **Main findings**

At the conclusion of the monitoring inspection, HMI shared the main findings of the visit

with the headteacher. HMI noted that progress had been made by the school in bringing about improvement in the following aspects of its work:

- Following the appointment of four new governors, the governing body now has greater confidence and experience in carrying out its role to support and challenge the school
- the revised school improvement plan now states more clearly the priorities for improvement, identifies which staff are responsible for different aspects of the plan and indicates how governors will check the progress made. Most timescales and monitoring strategies are now more clearly defined
- the revised curriculum is now more fully inclusive of all students
- the work of the student support group is highly effective in ensuring the views of students are heard and valued
- steps have been taken to strengthen the school's approaches to improving attendance, including through rewards and a focus on improving the attendance of all groups of students. Further consideration should be given to devising ways in which students can be rewarded for improved attendance as well as for meeting certain attendance thresholds.

However, in order to accelerate the pace of improvement, school leaders, governors and the local authority should:

- Sharpen the school improvement plan further by linking to each aspect measurable criteria by which the school will be judged 'good' at its next full inspection. Based on these criteria, the plan should also state appropriate milestones so that school leaders and governors can check that the school is on track to meet these expectations
- clarify the role of leaders, governors and the local authority in monitoring the pace and extent of improvements at the school, stating these clearly in the school improvement plan and regularly evaluating the progress made
- pursue with greater urgency and focus the links with Park View School, indicating clearly where these links will support actions identified in the school improvement plan
- place a greater emphasis on securing rapid improvements to teaching and learning, including through establishing a series of 'non-negotiable' features of 'good' teaching based on the Teachers' Standards. School leaders and governors should ensure that teachers' performance management targets and leaders' checks on teaching reflect closely these agreed features
- further develop the use of assessment information so that:
  - all teachers can use this information to plan lessons that closely meet the needs of every student
  - the school can demonstrate clearly the progress that students make
  - leaders can identify any underachievement and take prompt action in response
  - leaders and governors can measure the impact of actions taken.

HMI will visit the school again in the spring term 2014 in order to evaluate the impact of the actions taken by school leaders, governors and the local authority following this visit.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Northern  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**