

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 566863
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jbennett@cfbt.com



23 October 2013

Mr Michael Shepherd
Headteacher
Hawes Side Academy
Pedders Lane
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY4 3HZ

Dear Mr Shepherd

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hawes Side Academy, Blackpool

Following my visit to your school on 22 October 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure that for every action senior leaders are planning to take there is a clear understanding of how it will improve pupils' progress
- urgently establish an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school
- select monitoring activities that will have the greatest impact on improving progress
- ensure that senior leaders' responsibilities are clear to all staff and governors.
- make links with a national leader of governance so that governors can increase their understanding of pupils' progress and hold senior leaders to account more rigorously.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, a small group of pupils and representatives of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Three joint lesson observations took place, one with each member of the senior leadership team. The school action plan, data around achievement and records pertaining to the monitoring of teaching and learning were evaluated alongside a scrutiny of pupils' books.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection a new subject leader for numeracy has been appointed. There are two newly qualified teachers covering staff who are on maternity leave. A new leader for Year 3 and Year 4 has been appointed and will take up post after Christmas.

Main findings

You, your team and members of the governing body who met with me were shocked by the outcome of the Section 5 inspection but you have now accepted the judgements and are keen to get improvements underway. Since the inspection a number of staff have visited outstanding schools and brought back some new ideas. However, senior leaders have not evaluated sufficiently whether these new initiatives are making any difference to the rate of pupils' progress.

On-going self-evaluation is weak. Too much monitoring occurs on a weekly basis and does not form part of a properly planned cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review. Consequently, you and your team find it difficult to demonstrate the impact of the actions you have taken and the extent to which they have impacted on outcomes for pupils. Teachers are unclear what is expected of them which has created uncertainty amongst the staff. There is ambiguity around basic expectations such as the style in which pupils are expected to write and the methods to be used for teaching the sounds that letters make.

A big focus of your monitoring work is marking. Teachers are now marking books with codes to show whether work was completed independently or with support and whether verbal feedback was given. Aspects of pupils' work that need to be improved are highlighted in green and good aspects of work in pink. However some pupils do not know what the marking symbols mean and they do not always receive helpful comments telling them how to improve their work, so there is little impact upon their progress.

You and your team have an overly generous picture of the quality of teaching across the school; therefore you are unable to hold some teachers to account for the inadequate progress pupils make in their lessons. The criteria you use to grade lessons as good or better do not focus enough on the progress that all pupils make or the quality of their learning. Scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that insufficient attention is given to the learning of students whose literacy is weak or those who are disabled or have special educational needs.

Your school action plan needs further work. There is some confusion over the actions you will take and the ways in which you will measure the impact. You need to prioritise the most important actions and communicate them to staff so everyone knows what part they will play in improvements.

Members of the governing body do not have a good enough understanding of performance data to confidently challenge senior leaders on pupils' progress. Some policies and procedures need to be updated so that they reflect current practice in school. Governors have not made clear what evidence of improvements they want to see from leaders at all levels or when they want to see it.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You commission support from a school improvement partner independent of the local authority. Sports funding is used to commission a company to run fitness coaching sessions with pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following: