

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 566857
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jkinsman@cfbt.com



23 October 2013

Mr David Hayes
Principal
Oasis Academy Oldham
Hollins Road
Hollinwood
Oldham
OL8 4JZ

Dear Mr Hayes

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Oldham

Following my visit to your academy on 22 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the academy's most recent monitoring inspection.

This visit was the third monitoring inspection since the academy was judged as having serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in November 2012. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State and the Chair of the Academy Council.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2012

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers assess students' work accurately and use this information on the progress of individuals and groups to plan activities that closely match the range of learning needs
 - teachers make more precise use of learning objectives to teach specific skills and to evaluate learners' success
 - lessons get off to a quick and interesting start and provide a clear challenge
 - frequent marking consistently identifies specific strengths and targets for improvement.

- Raise standards, especially in English, mathematics and science by introducing, and meeting, academy targets that are based on students making at least three or more levels progress from age 11 to 16.

- Eradicate persistent low-level disruption in lessons:
 - by making sure the academy's expectations of behaviour are clear to all staff and students, and that rewards and sanctions are applied consistently by all staff
 - by increasing students' self-esteem, verbal confidence and skills in literacy, and their understanding of how to learn, especially the boys
 - leading to a reduction in temporary exclusions from the academy and from lessons, and contributing to a further reduction of persistent absence.

- Improve the impact of the academy's leaders by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and reducing the proportion that requires improvement, as well as tackling inconsistencies in the quality of leadership through more rigorous performance management and stronger accountability of staff
 - further reviewing and adapting the provision of courses and activities beyond the academy day to better meet students' needs and interests, and more effectively promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - strengthening the role of the academy council in critically questioning the performance of leaders, staff and students and the impact of particular initiatives, such as those funded by the pupil premium.

In addition, the following areas were cited as requiring improvement action in the February 2013 monitoring letter.

- Ensure that the improvement plan identifies how progress will be measured towards meeting success criteria in the short and medium term by adding milestones and evaluative reviews of progress.
- Ensure that middle leaders and teachers are adept in the use of data to set and monitor students' progress targets and to intervene effectively when these are not met.
- Embed further current initiatives to improve behaviour and attendance.
- Extend further the training on teaching and learning approaches undertaken with Oasis Academy Limeside so that more teachers and curriculum areas benefit.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 22 October 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the Principal, other senior leaders, members of staff, the Chair and members of the Academy Council, groups of pupils and a representative of the sponsor. A learning walk of the academy was undertaken to assess behaviour and improvements to teaching and learning. Documents summarising actions taken by the academy to promote improvement since the second monitoring visit were scrutinised, including an updated self-evaluation.

Context

Since the second monitoring visit in May 2013, a new associate principal has been appointed and taken up post. A new head of English has been appointed and taken up post along with new heads of mathematics, technology and expressive arts/music.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The Principal provides a relentless and increasingly successful focus on improving students' pass rates and developing a strong aspirational and improvement culture within the academy. He has significantly strengthened the quality and effectiveness of senior leadership. Senior leaders are drivers of the academy's developing culture of improvement, creativity and accountability. Middle management has been strengthened through new appointments, better quality assurance systems and very good training programmes. Expectations for both staff and students are high. Data are used well at senior and middle management level to promote improvement. Student tracking and monitoring systems are sharp and better inform actions to improve students' progress and pass rates. Above all, there has been a cultural change within the academy towards establishing an environment where students' progress, achievement, aspirations and enjoyment, and commitment to learning are becoming paramount. Senior leaders have a very realistic understanding of the need to accelerate, sustain and embed improvement further and of the challenges that the attainment of those objectives presents. Self-evaluation is realistic, accurate and ambitious.

The academy council has played a strong role in supporting the academy's leadership. The Chair of the Academy Council sets very high aspirations and ambitions and has promoted a culture of robust challenge and performance management for the Principal and senior leaders. The council members have a strong understanding of the improvement issues facing the academy.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- In 2012/13, there was a significant improvement in GCSE pass rates. For GCSE 5A* to C including English and mathematics, there was a 17 percentage point increase to a 50% pass rate. For GCSE 5A* to C, there was an 18 percentage point increase to 85%. The academy leaders realise that improvement needs to be both sustained and accelerated so that results are in line with and then exceed national averages. Achievement gaps between different groups of students have narrowed. In particular, the gap between those students supported by the pupil premium funding and their peers has significantly reduced. Leaders acknowledge the need for more rapid improvement in mathematics at GCSE level. Most recent academy data indicate further improvement at Key Stage 4 for the current cohort in both Years 11 and 10. Academy data indicate significant progress at Key Stage 3 and a narrowing of the achievement gaps between different groups of students. More work is required to enable the most-able students to make better progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. Last year's extended learning course lead by Oasis Academy Limeside, on the ways and means to develop better and more innovative teaching and learning practice, has now been extended to all teaching staff. The change in the teaching and learning culture was apparent from the learning walk undertaken during the monitoring visit. Students in lessons were more engaged in challenging activities. Classes conveyed greater energy and purposefulness in learning. Teachers were using a wider range of teaching techniques and approaches to involve and challenge students. Academy data indicate a reduction in the percentage of teaching that requires improvement but academy leaders acknowledge the challenge in reducing this further so that all teaching is at least good.
- Students' behaviour has improved. Students move from lesson to lesson with greater purpose. Behaviour in lessons and around the academy campus is now positive. Students feel more at ease within the academy environment and treat one another and adults with growing respect. Attendance and punctuality continue to improve. The new house system is working well and is appreciated and valued by students. Students say it is making them more positive about learning and instilling a healthy competitiveness. Leaders acknowledge that they now need to build upon this by creating greater opportunities for reading and cultural activities so that students are further challenged to extend themselves.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders acknowledge the need for further students' progress at both key stages. Such recognition is built into their self-evaluation and development plans. In particular, pass rates and progress in mathematics need to be more rapidly improved at GCSE level. I have asked the academy to consider how students' progress is monitored in mathematics so as to better provide more focused intervention for students in Years 10 and 11.

External support

The link with the Oasis Academy Limeside has been further strengthened. In particular, work on improving teaching and learning has been extended to all staff through a two-hour session each Thursday afternoon. Innovative ideas are being developed also to improve provision in Year 7 so that any skill deficits are tackled quickly. The academy sponsor continues to play a pivotal role in supporting the academy and academy council in promoting and embedding improvement.