

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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



21 March 2014

Mr Piers Tolson  
Headteacher  
Wellfield Business & Enterprise College  
Yewlands Drive  
Leyland  
Lancashire  
PR25 2TP

Dear Mr Tolson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wellfield Business & Enterprise College, Lancashire**

Following my visit to your school on 20 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings. 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 November 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- continue building on the good initiatives to improve teaching and learning already being undertaken by the school.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, students, members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and other relevant documentation such as the school's behaviour for learning key data indicators.

### **Main findings**

The process that the school has gone through to enable you to come out of special measures has left you well placed to continue to improve and move the school towards becoming 'good'. All areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are being tackled effectively and with urgency and commitment. Your school improvement plan (SIP) has clear, detailed milestones for improvements. The plan includes key success criteria linked to well-considered resource implications and realistic timelines. Much of your plan is already

underway and early targets to improve the quality of teaching and learning are being met through the application of rigorous data analysis that informs targeted intervention strategies. It is good to see that the SIP goes beyond the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and includes other initiatives such as further utilising the effectiveness of teaching assistants and strengthening the reward system to encourage academic endeavour. Your 'behaviour for learning' indicators show a steady decline in the number of exclusions as well as improvements in overall attendance figures. Your close analysis of the data has also revealed some anomalies such as the recent fall in attendance of students you have identified as school action plus, enabling you to take speedy actions to address the problem.

The linked initiatives you have put in place to tackle improvements in teaching and learning and in middle leadership are proving effective. Subject leadership in science is now much stronger following a period of instability and as a result, outcomes for students show signs of improvement. A subject knowledge audit of staff in the science department and subsequent buddying programme has ensured teachers' subject knowledge can be supported by specialists. It is clear that teachers are now accountable for the progress of their classes rather than sharing this responsibility with other teachers. Support from the Institute of Physics and a local authority consultant is also helping the department prepare for curriculum changes.

Both the science and English departments have benefitted from working closely with the very effective mathematics department. Training sessions led by the head of mathematics on data analysis and strategies to use when working with parents are helping to close the pupil premium attainment gap. Middle leaders across the school are now more accountable for the quality of teaching and learning in their departments and are regularly engaged in lesson observations and book scrutiny within and between departments. The marking of students' work has been a key focus for improvement and students confirm that it is now much more helpful to them. One boy stated that, 'books get marked much more quickly now' and another commented that, 'we now know what to do to improve and we are given the time to do it'.

Students also approve of the changes to teaching and learning since the last inspection. They commented that teaching in science now meets their individual needs because they are well supported and challenged, and that lessons are 'speeded up' with 'teachers making sure you are actually learning'. One boy commented positively that, 'we all work much harder now'. Students value the rewards system although they would like to see it applied more consistently; they would like to have more opportunities to contribute to the improvement agenda through their school council representatives; and they would prefer to have fewer supply teachers. One girl commented that she would like the school to have a study club for those doing their GCSEs. Leadership at all levels have a good understanding of what needs to be done to sustain improvements. Governance is strong. The governing body have grown in expertise and confidence during the time the school was in special measures. They are committed, supportive and well placed to continue holding you and senior leaders to account.

The development of the link governor role with subject departments is proving effective in keeping governors informed and they welcome the regular engagement they have with student groups.

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**

Support from the local authority has reduced as you and your staff have developed and strengthened your capacity to improve at all levels of leadership and in English and science in particular. The local authority continues to provide some consultant support for English and science and have brokered a visit to the science department of a local outstanding school. They are reviewing their contract with the school on a termly basis according to perceived need. The governors in particular have appreciated the help they have received from the local authority and although this is now much reduced they say they feel confident that they can call for further support if they felt they needed it.

You have already attended Ofsted's Getting to Good seminar with the Chair of Governors and accompanied members of the English department to the Better English seminar. I hope that you found these helpful. I have contacted the director of STEM education North West who will email you with details of their CPD programme and bespoke services and Mark Williams HMI is expecting to hear from you regarding your possible shadowing of a section 5 inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

**Her Majesty's Inspector**