

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0121 679 9154
Direct email: aidan.dunne@serco.com



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Mrs Debbie McGloin
New Mills School Business & Enterprise College
Church Lane
New Mills
High Peak
SK22 4NR

Dear Mrs McGloin

Special measures monitoring inspection of New Mills School Business & Enterprise College

Following my visit with Paul Heery Additional Inspector to your school on 7–8 October 2014, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time that the school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter has been copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- The Secretary of State
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA)

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to increase the progress students make across many subjects, including in English and mathematics, but most especially in science by:
 - eliminating all inadequate teaching
 - urgently challenging the culture of low expectations that some teachers have, both of what they should be expected to do, and what can be achieved by their students
 - ensuring that all teachers plan lessons that take more account of the needs of students of different abilities
 - improving assessment practice so that all teachers regularly mark work and ensure that students have clear advice on how to improve their work
 - applying whole-school and consistent approaches to improving students' literacy skills, particularly writing, and making certain that all students follow the advice that teachers provide.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the information gathered on students' progress and performance includes sufficient detail for school leaders, including governors, to analyse trends over time and is used to improve teachers' planning and to hold them to account for students' achievement
 - urgently reviewing all policies and procedures relating to taking students off-site and ensuring that staff are appropriately trained to assess and minimise risks to students
 - establishing a robust performance management system which provides staff with an accurate evaluation of the quality of their teaching based on the progress that students make
 - including in the school improvement plan clear markers by which progress can be judged and building in processes for more effective monitoring, so that leaders and governors can properly evaluate the impact of their actions
 - reviewing and optimising the use of the pupil premium to raise the achievement of students who are eligible for this funding.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 7-8 October 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, a National Leader of Education supporting the school, and several groups of students.

Context

The headteacher is new to the school, having taken up the post on a full-time basis in September. Since the first monitoring visit, three teachers have left the school. Another three teachers will leave the school at the end of this term, including the head of the science department. Three teachers joined the school at the start of this term. The school is now being supported by Cheadle Hume High School, including by its headteacher who is a National Leader of Education.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics increased very slightly in 2014 when compared to the previous year. There was a notable increase in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved this measure. However, students do not achieve the progress expected of them in several subject areas, and particularly in science, French and religious education (RE). Not enough students exceed the progress expected of them in English and mathematics.

School leaders cannot accurately identify rates of progress for students in Years 7 to 9. This is due to historic inadequacies in methods used to track students' progress. This is being addressed through the use of a new software system; it currently only holds data on the progress being made by the school's older students. Further, the data is not as reliable as it needs to be, as evidenced by many of the predictions for student achievement in 2014 being inaccurate.

The quality of teaching

School data show that the quality of teaching has improved recently. Weekly professional development sessions and meetings to discuss different teaching approaches have contributed to this, as have the six members of staff who are working with colleagues as peer coaches. The learning observed during the inspection confirmed that there is very good practice in several subject areas, including German, catering and music. The teaching observed in the sixth form was generally good. However, senior leaders agree that inadequate teaching remains and the improvements that have been made are in spite of incomplete pupil progress

data; teachers find it more difficult to meet the needs of individuals when they do not know their students' current capabilities. As a result, some students, especially the most able, are not always adequately challenged.

Teachers generally have higher expectations of students than they did at the time of the first monitoring visit but there is still much work to do in this regard. Students' books do not consistently reflect high standards as teachers still accept work that is often poorly presented. Excellently presented work was seen in English, German, mathematics and geography.

Teachers are marking work more regularly and examples of good, formative feedback were seen during the inspection. However, this is not consistent and marking is generally not as developmental as it should be. Even when it is, it is not having the desired impact because students are not routinely directed to respond to it. Some teachers are still unsure about what constitutes good marking or what is acceptable in terms of student response. There is also a lack of marking that helps to develop literacy skills.

In order to help improve students' literacy skills, a new member of staff with responsibility for this area has been appointed. An action plan for improving literacy across the curriculum is in place and tutor periods are being used for wider reading. However, these developments are recent and no impact can yet be judged.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Not all members of staff agree that the behaviour of students in the school is good. However, students feel there has been a marked improvement in this area since the arrival of the new headteacher who has set out very clear expectations of behaviour standards. Students' behaviour seen during the inspection was good. Students in all year groups were polite and keen to learn. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire believe that behaviour in the school is good. There is a very low rate of exclusions.

At the time of the first monitoring visit in May, some off-site activities had been suspended pending the creation of an effective system for carrying out risk assessments. This has now been resolved.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The school's new headteacher has had an immediate and positive impact. However, at the time of this visit she has only been in post for five weeks so the extent of the impact is understandably limited. As observed in the report following the first monitoring visit in May, valuable time was wasted after the inspection due to a lack of effective action from senior leaders. More time was wasted after that visit. The headteacher was able to begin her work late in the summer term. It is from this time

onwards that effective action began to be taken; because of several months of inactivity, improvements have not happened at the necessary rate. The headteacher is now addressing this.

The rate of progress the headteacher has been able to make has been compromised by a necessity to create effective systems fundamental to a school being adequately functional. This includes a system to track students' progress (which is still in development), and a robust and consistent approach to performance management. She has created and introduced several improved policies including those for teaching and learning; marking and feedback; homework; and quality assurance.

The headteacher has made her expectations of staff and students very clear and the majority of both groups are supportive of the new and necessary direction. The revised school improvement plan is honest, accurate and clearly outlines necessary actions to address the identified areas for development.

Teachers, and particularly heads of department, are now more accountable for the progress made by their students. Meetings in this regard are now fortnightly and more focused on student achievement; teachers have to create intervention plans for those students at risk of not making the progress expected of them. As with other initiatives introduced by the headteacher, the impact is currently limited due to the short timescales involved.

Three governors have left since the first monitoring visit. The governing body has been preoccupied by discussions over the school's future status and over its own restructuring. These issues have been a distraction at a time when this could be least afforded. However, recent activity by governors linked with individual subjects has helped them become much better informed about underachievement, and of the need for urgent action to be taken. Governors have been invited by the headteacher to attend student progress meetings; the Chair of the Governing Body feels this has been a very valuable process and indicates a much more transparent and constructive approach from senior leaders.

The Chair of the Governing Body feels that senior leaders other than the headteacher could be more pro-active in providing the governing body with necessary information about the performance of both members of staff and students. Governors and the headteacher are working together to improve this. The headteacher will give governors training on how to better understand student achievement data. The governor with responsibility for the achievement of disadvantaged students has visited the school on several occasions to offer challenge in this regard. The Chair of the Governing Body identified that the school was over-reliant on one individual for issues relating to child protection. Three members of staff are now scheduled to have training in this area later this term.

External support

The local authority has agreed a substantial financial package to help fund the improvements necessary to ensure this school makes sufficient progress for the removal of special measures. The local authority's coaching programme has been delivered to six teachers and this has had an initial positive impact on the quality of teaching. The local authority representative has visited the school on several occasions to offer support, including judging the quality of teaching. More local authority support is planned, including through consultants in English and science.

The local authority helped broker the support of Cheadle Hume High School. The leader of this outstanding teaching school offered informal, personal support to the headteacher in the summer term. The school-to-school support has now become more formal. Members of staff from Cheadle Hume High School conducted a thorough, week-long strategic review of the school in mid-September. The results of this have been used to create a support plan which had only just been completed at the time of this visit.

A programme of bespoke professional development opportunities from the support school includes sessions on lesson planning, effective marking, raising expectations, and on the use of student progress data. Members of staff from the support school will also deliver master classes to targeted students.

Six members of staff from Cheadle Hume High School will begin work at the school in the near future. A deputy headteacher will work two days a week to support improvements in teaching and learning; three Specialist Leaders of Education, in English, mathematics and science will support the school on a part-time basis; and two teachers (one in mathematics and one in science) will be seconded to the school on a full-time basis; these latter two members of staff will join the school's leadership team.