

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View
Skelmersdale

WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566850

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: dmccarrick@cfbt.com

11 December 2014

Mr Philip Wilson
Acting Principal
Droylsden Academy
Manor Road
Droylsden
Manchester
Greater Manchester
M43 6QD

Dear Mr Wilson

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Droylsden Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 10 December 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in March 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The academy is not making enough 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, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Executive Director for Tameside.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and increase the proportion which is good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations are consistently high
 - teachers use the available data on students' achievement and their own assessments more effectively to plan lessons that take better account of students' starting points
 - teachers challenge different groups of learners more appropriately
 - teachers identify and use opportunities to develop students' literacy, numeracy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in all subjects
 - marking is consistently good, providing clear feedback to students on how they can improve their work and checking that students respond
 - support by teaching assistants becomes fully effective through training and careful planning.

- Consolidate the very recent gains in students' achievement by:
 - speeding up the progress of all groups of students
 - closing the gaps in achievement between groups of students of different abilities, including those supported by the pupil premium.

- Further improve leadership by ensuring that:
 - the best practice already seen in the academy is shared more widely
 - the responsibility and accountability of middle leaders is further extended
 - senior leaders and governors complete the development of the academy improvement plan so that improvement proceeds at the rapid pace required
 - an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, is undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 December 2014

Evidence

The inspector met with the Acting Principal, the Vice-Principal and the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also a representative of the sponsor. The inspector met with a group of Key Stage 3 students and a group of Key Stage 4 students and carried out a scrutiny of their work. The inspector observed five lessons covering mathematics, science and languages. Senior leaders accompanied the inspector in four of these observations. The primary focus of visits to lessons was to determine the extent of improvements in teaching that had taken place since the last inspection and the extent to which the most able students were receiving sufficient challenge in their learning. The inspector also looked closely at documentary evidence provided by the academy which included minutes of the governors' curriculum and quality standards committee, the academy's self-evaluation, an external report on the academy's use of the pupil premium (additional government money), as well as data related to students' current achievement.

Context

A few days before this monitoring inspection, the principal resigned for personal reasons. One of the Vice-Principals has taken over the role of Acting Principal until the governors make a permanent appointment. There have been a number of other changes to staffing since the last monitoring inspection in June 2014. A significant number of teaching staff left the academy at the end of the year and several new appointments have been made. A curriculum leader has been seconded to the senior leadership team as part of a Future Leaders placement. Two newly qualified teachers have joined the mathematics department. A newly qualified teacher and a recently qualified teacher have joined the science department, together with another newly qualified Teach First teacher who completed his training year at the academy. Two Teach First appointments have been made in the English department. There is a new second in department in modern foreign languages, where there has also been an appointment of a newly qualified teacher. Two experienced teachers have joined the humanities department and there is a new second in department in design and technology. Two other newly qualified teachers have also been appointed, joining another newly qualified teacher who trained at the academy last year through School Direct.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The strong and focused leadership identified at the last monitoring inspection has not been sufficient to bring about significant improvement in students' achievement. Unvalidated data for the academy's performance in 2014 indicate a three-year trend of decline in the overall progress that students are making. There are particular concerns about the progress and attainment of students in mathematics, science

and languages. A much more positive picture is seen in English where the progress and attainment of students have improved significantly. These unvalidated data reveal that the gap between outcomes for disadvantaged students and others nationally and within the academy remain wide and are not closing quickly enough.

Governors and senior leaders took decisive action before the summer to improve the quality of teaching across the academy and this has had some impact. More students are now benefiting from consistently good teaching and the Key Stage 4 students were keen to tell me about this. However, data indicate that the most able students are not achieving well and evidence gathered on the inspection shows that teachers are not providing sufficient challenge for this group.

Governors continue to monitor progress systematically in the academy through the curriculum and quality standards committee and the full governing body meeting. Following the disappointing outcomes in many areas in the 2014 examinations, they know they need to be even more rigorous in holding leaders to account. To this end, one governor, with the necessary expertise, is working very closely with leaders in the mathematics department. Self-evaluation is strong and accurate.

Students wear their uniforms smartly which reflects the continued emphasis which leaders have on high standards of behaviour. Although the students spoken to talked of how behaviour has improved generally both in and out of lessons, they were frustrated that not all teachers are using the behaviour system effectively and consistently. However, the high expectations which leaders have of students' behaviour are not matched by the expectations they have of their achievement.

The single central record (the register of checks on adults working with children in the academy) is managed extremely well and fully meets all requirements.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Students' attendance continues to improve. The overall attendance rate is above the national average. The academy has had particular success in tackling students who are persistently absent. The rate for persistent absenteeism has declined over the last three years to below the national average in 2014. The appointment of a very experienced member of staff to the position of student services manager has contributed to further improvements in attendance and behaviour.
- The rate of students' progress in English has speeded up significantly. In 2014 the proportion of students who made expected progress in English improved to above the national average. The work which the academy has done in English with students who had low prior attainment is particularly impressive. The proportion who made expected and more than expected progress was significantly above the national average. In 2014, 70% of

students attained grade A* to C in English, which is above the national average.

- Recent monitoring carried out by senior leaders shows that teaching across the academy is improving, although there is a long way to go to ensure that teaching is consistently good in all areas.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- For the last three years, the attainment and progress of students in mathematics have been significantly below national average. The academy's data predicted an improvement in 2014, but instead there was a further deterioration in students' achievement in this subject. The proportion of students making expected and more than expected progress was significantly below the national average. The progress of the most able students gives particular cause for concern, with only 52% making expected progress and a mere 10% making more than expected progress. Action to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in mathematics has not been swift and decisive enough to bring about improvement in the outcomes for students.
- Apart from in English, students are not making enough progress. The targets which senior and middle leaders set for students do not represent high enough expectations. The academy's own analysis of achievement data reflects this lack of aspiration, as it is based on students making only expected, rather than accelerated, progress. The impact of this across the academy is that teachers do not routinely have high enough expectations of what their students can achieve. Consequently, too many teachers are planning work for students which does not challenge them to make accelerated progress.
- Recent data suggest a small improvement in the size of the gaps between disadvantaged students and others in the academy. However, not enough progress has been made in this area since the last inspection. The pupil premium information provided by the academy does not focus on the impact of actions and interventions. The way this funding is spent is not tracked strategically enough to ensure that it is having the desired effect. Ensuring that disadvantaged students achieve as well as their peers is not a high enough priority across the academy.
- A scrutiny of students' work showed that there has been some improvement in how teachers are marking their work. However, there remains too much variation in the quality of feedback which students receive. Students do not always respond to teachers' comments and this is not followed up. Not all teachers are giving effective feedback, particularly on how to improve and make further progress.

External support

The academy received external support from the local authority Performance and Standard's Strategic Lead for English to help bring about improvement of standards in this subject. The sponsors have brokered links with a neighbouring school which has a strong record in mathematics to help bring about similar improvements in this area. One of the governors, who is a mathematics specialist, is now working very closely with the leadership of this department, providing the necessary challenge to bring about rapid improvement to outcomes in this subject. Sponsors have acted very swiftly to provide the required support for the Acting Principal until a permanent appointment is made.