

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment
Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566932

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: hcarnall@cftb.com



16 January 2015

Ms Tay Warren
Headteacher
Cathedral Academy
Thornes Road
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF2 8QF

Dear Ms Warren

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cathedral Academy, Wakefield

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, governors and the academy's improvement adviser to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy's development plan was evaluated and short visits were made to 14 lessons.

Context

A new Chair and Vice Chair of Governors took up post at the beginning of January following the retirement of the previous post holders at the end of last term.

Main findings

The development plan includes carefully devised strategies and actions that have been well staged. Key milestones and regular monitoring make it easy to track improvements and spot any areas needing extra attention.

The new data system is already providing teachers with the information needed to plan lessons more effectively. It is too early to measure the impact but the next data collection in February should highlight successful initiatives and pinpoint where further action is needed. External expertise and best practice from within the academy are used well to provide both overall training and bespoke targeted sessions on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection. The quality of marking has improved strongly and many examples were seen of students responding very positively to teachers' comments.

Students' attitudes are improving. Higher targets are being set and priority given to celebrating success. Students take increasing pride in their work and many more are volunteering for extra classes. The extensive range of strategies and incentives to improve attendance are continuing to have an impact and the figures are edging closer to the national average.

The Principal has a clear vision and a very good grasp of exactly where the academy is on the journey to good. She is ably supported by senior leaders who are driving improvements forward and giving good support to middle leaders who increasingly hold their teams to account. Performance management is tight. Bespoke support programmes for teachers and leaders have been successful in a number of cases but tough action is taken if not. The review of governance was temporarily delayed until the new governing body was in place but the recording of governors' meetings has already been strengthened so that relevant questions and challenges are captured in the minutes. Plans for the review of pupil premium funding are underway.

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

The academy is receiving good support for improving teaching, particularly in mathematics, from the Wakefield Regional Teaching School Alliance and they have plans to run a middle leaders training programme. The academy's improvement adviser knows Cathedral well and leaders value the range of tailored support that he provides. The academy also works with other schools in the diocese and has strengthening ties with Trinity Academy – an outstanding school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- For academies [CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk]