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5 February 2015

Miss Kelly Dawson
Headteacher
Coal Clough High School
Swindon Street
Burnley
Lancashire
BB11 4PF

Dear Miss Dawson

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Coal Clough High School

Following my visit to your school on 4 February 2015 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 was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in May 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

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

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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 Management Committee and the Executive Director for Children & Young People for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better so that students, particularly the most able, make at least good progress especially in Key Stage 3 and in writing and mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students can do and achieve so students are well motivated and challenged
 - ensuring that teachers always use the information from assessing what students already know and can do to plan work that meets the students' varying needs
 - improving the quality of marking so the students are clear about what they need to do to improve and ensuring they respond to the teachers' advice when given
 - making sure students use and apply their writing and reading skills to a good or better standard when they complete work in the different subjects they study
 - sharing more widely the examples of good and outstanding practice across the school.
- Urgently improve students' behaviour so that all students are safe, learning is not disrupted, lessons start promptly and learning time is not lost by:
 - quickly reviewing, developing as necessary and monitoring the application of the school's behaviour policy so that it helps staff to consistently and effectively meet the behavioural needs of all students in the school, especially those who have recently joined the main school site
 - providing training for all staff so that they have the skills needed to effectively manage students' behaviour, particularly those whose behaviour is very disruptive
 - encouraging students to take a pride in their work and fostering a good level of respect for staff, one another and for their school.
- Improve attendance, particularly by reducing the number of students who are persistently absent and making sure that leaders regularly check that it is improving quickly enough for the different groups of students.
- Improve the impact of leadership, management and governance by:
 - improving the methods used to track, record and evaluate students' attainment and progress so it is clear how well all groups of students, especially those supported by the pupil premium, achieve
 - making sure that the action plans for improving individual teachers' performance are even more focused and monitored very closely so that inadequate teaching is eradicated and more teaching is good or better

developing the role of middle leaders so that they have a good understanding of how well students are doing in their subject or area of responsibility and can effectively check the quality of teaching
providing vocational courses with a higher level of challenge so that the students involved can achieve their potential
making sure that the management committee checks that where funds and resources, for example the pupil premium, have been allocated, they are having a positive impact on improving students' achievement, behaviour and attendance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4 February 2015

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Management Committee and a representative from the local authority. The inspector observed the work of the school and spoke with students in classrooms and informally around the school. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school improvement plan, attendance data, records of behaviour incidents, pupil progress data, records of teaching and learning, and external reviews of governance and the school's use of pupil premium (additional government money).

Context

Since the last inspection a deputy headteacher has retired and the school has appointed a head of the mathematics department and a teacher of vocational courses in motor vehicle maintenance and construction. A member of the management committee has resigned.

The school is considering becoming an academy in the future and has met with a potential sponsor.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Improvements in the effectiveness of leadership and management are evident in the improved tracking, recording and evaluation of students' attainment and progress, greater rigour in the monitoring of teaching and reductions in the levels of truancy and incidents of poor behaviour. The information that is kept regarding individual students' progress and behaviour is now detailed and comprehensive. However, the school's analysis of teaching and learning indicates that not all teachers use this information effectively to plan lessons. This was confirmed during the inspection where some students were observed repeating work they had covered in the previous year. Regular scrutiny of students' work by senior and middle leaders has led to improvements in the marking of books, although there is little evidence that students are acting on their teachers' comments and advice. It is the case that too few students demonstrate a positive and enthusiastic attitude to learning and there is insufficient evidence of their work and achievements displayed around the school.

The school improvement plan and the management committee action plan have been annotated to denote which actions have taken place since the inspection. However, the school does not indicate whether or not the actions have had a positive impact and resulted in the success criteria being met.

Proposed changes to the curriculum are in place which are designed to ensure that future vocational courses will be offered at higher levels to meet students' needs and aspirations better.

The local authority commissioned an external review of the work of the management committee and carried out a review of the school's use of the pupil premium fund. The management committee members are now more aware of their roles and responsibilities. However, not all of the recommendations from these two reviews have been actioned and evidence of impact on outcomes is limited. The school is yet to publish its pupil premium policy, including evidence of impact, on the school's website.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Attendance has increased as a result of the considerable efforts made by the school to tackle absenteeism through a range of effective strategies.
- Behaviour has improved due to a more consistent application of the school's behaviour policy and improved relationships between staff and students.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Teachers do not systematically use the information they have on what students already know and what they can do to plan work that meets their varying needs.
- The resources selected for use in the classroom are not always effective in capturing students' interest and developing their enthusiasm for learning.

External support

The local authority has provided a range of support, including joint lesson observations from a member of the monitoring and intervention team, brokering a visit to an outstanding pupil referral unit and providing advisory support for the mathematics and English departments. These interventions have had a positive impact on teachers' ability to track and monitor students' progress. Support from the local authority's behaviour and attendance consultant and from a retired headteacher of a local special school has helped the school improve attendance and reduce incidents of poor behaviour.