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12 February 2015

Mr Adrian Kneeshaw
Headteacher
Carlton Bolling College
Undercliffe Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD3 0DU

Dear Mr Kneeshaw

Special measures monitoring inspection of Carlton Bolling College

Following my visit with Mary Lanovy-Taylor, Additional Inspector, and Janet Pruchniewicz, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 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 became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 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:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school improvement plan is now fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection but only with my prior approval.

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 and the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Michael Maddison

Associate Inspector

Appointed as an Associate Inspector under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule V2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Annex

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

- Immediately carry out a review of governance so that the governing body is fit for purpose, understands its role and responsibilities, carries out its statutory and other duties within the boundaries expected and ensures that:
 - all policies meet requirements and are up to date and ratified by the governing body, especially those related to child protection and safeguarding
 - the named governor for safeguarding is suitably trained
 - staff and governors are well trained on how to identify and respond to possible risks to students from extreme or radical views so they can better safeguard students from such risks
 - school policies and practice are sensitive to and meet the needs of all students so that all are treated equally, with equal opportunities to benefit from all that the college has to offer
 - the views of parents and carers are gathered by governors regularly to inform the college's work.

- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent by:
 - improving the use of the detailed information leaders hold about attendance of different groups so they can investigate, and then tackle, the causes of non-attendance.

- Raise students' achievements in all subjects further by:
 - implementing fully the recent strategies to drive improvement in teaching
 - tackling the variability in the quality of teaching across all key stages including the sixth form and in different subjects
 - tackling the causes of some students' lack of engagement in lessons and by ensuring a consistent approach to the management of behaviour in all lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what students can do and high expectations of the quality and presentation of work they complete
 - raising students' understanding of what good achievement looks like by showcasing and celebrating high-quality work on classroom walls and displays across the college
 - sharing the strongest practice in teaching including marking and feedback and effective teacher questioning and by seeking to learn from good practice outside the college.

- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by:

- ensuring that the college's provision gives high priority to helping students stay safe by teaching them to understand the possible risks posed by the behaviour of others
- ensuring that the governing body contributes to, rather than detracts from, the college's overall effectiveness
- senior leaders and governors, through their actions and behaviours, working to improve relationships and trust among the staff community
- ensuring that changes that affect students' experience of school, including of the curriculum, take equal account of their different needs and faiths
- ensuring that all middle leaders have the skills to raise students' achievement and can demonstrate the impact of their work through improving outcomes over time.

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 college's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the college.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 February 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and met with the headteacher, members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), one of whom was the Chair, senior and middle leaders, individual teaching and support staff, and the local authority's senior area achievement officer. They visited 26 full and part lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders, two assemblies and a number of tutor periods. They spoke informally to many students, as well as having formal meetings with students representing Years 7, 9 and 11. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation which included unvalidated GCSE results for 2014; information about students' current achievement; the updated school improvement plan; the updated safeguarding policy; the independent review of the pupil premium (additional money used to support disadvantaged students); the local authority reviews of the curriculum and safeguarding; behaviour and attendance data; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, and the minutes of the IEB and the School Specific Monitoring Group (SSMG).

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection there have been a number of changes in staffing. At the end of the autumn term four staff left the school and at the start of the spring term four new teachers joined the school. There are now seven members of the IEB, thus increasing the membership of this body from four members which was the position at the first monitoring inspection last October. This monitoring inspection focused principally on progress on implementing the improvement agenda at Key Stages 3 and 4. Future monitoring visits will focus on progress in the sixth form, as well as these key stages.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Unvalidated GCSE results for 2014 indicate that, although their attainment overall was low, students' achievement was high especially in mathematics and science. The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics, for example, was above the national average. However, this success was not replicated for all students across all subjects. Students did not make as much progress in the humanities' subjects given their prior attainment. The school has put in place a series of actions to ensure that students do better in these subjects in 2015. In the sixth form, students achieved better in vocational subjects than in A level subjects. Senior leaders are determined to improve the situation this summer and in future years so that all post-16 students achieve the best grades possible no matter what the range of subjects they study.

In-year school data indicate that students' achievement is improving. The most recent assessment of students' performance suggests that more students are on track to meet their targets this summer in Year 11 and in the sixth form. This is the result of a number of factors, notably a more thorough analysis of the data available, greater awareness of that data amongst all staff, a move towards more aspirational targets for all students, and closer tracking and timely intervention to support those students in danger of underperforming. Although the data available to teachers is becoming more widely available, not all teachers are using that information to plan lessons which help students make best progress from their different starting points. Senior leaders are aware of this weakness and of the need to make the effective use of data a regular feature of staff training.

In lessons, students' rates of progress are increasing because of improvements to teaching. In those lessons where students make at least expected progress, tasks are carefully adapted to help them do this. One consequence of this is that students have more positive attitudes to learning. However, the identification of appropriate tasks to suit all students is not a consistently successful feature of lessons. One particular aspect of learning that is slowing progress for some students is their weak oracy skills. Speaking and listening skills are not being systematically developed across the school so that students are able to learn from what others say and think. Too many students are allowed to mumble when giving oral answers and, as a result, their points cannot be heard and appreciated by their classmates. This weakens students' learning and progress.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving and senior leaders have had some success in reducing the variable quality of teaching and learning experienced by students. This is helping to improve achievement. Where teaching is most effective, thorough planning and preparation ensures that activities promote learning. Relationships between students and with adults are positive and classrooms are calm environments where students are able to focus on gaining new knowledge and understanding. Questioning by teachers is effective and enables students to articulate their knowledge and their views. Marking and feedback to students in their books helps students to make progress. This is especially so where the 'feed forward' approach has been adopted and used to identify precise activities to correct misconceptions or remedy omissions and require students to respond immediately. Students in both Key Stage 3 and 4 noted how much they appreciated this approach. Inspectors observed particularly effective teaching and learning in mathematics lessons and this helps to explain the encouraging progress students make in this subject.

These characteristics of the best teaching and learning are not yet consistently evident across all subjects and year groups. Too much teaching is not yet effective enough because expectations are not high enough and there is insufficient challenge

for students especially the most able. In the lessons where there is weaker learning, questioning by teachers tends to be superficial and does not probe students' knowledge and understanding in the depth required to help them move forward in their learning. Marking does not help students to improve either because, when used, the next steps lack precision. Inspectors observed too many lessons where all students were given the same work irrespective of their starting points. These lessons lacked challenge and were often accompanied by a subsequent decline in students' engagement and concentration.

Senior leaders responsible for leading improvements in teaching and learning are beginning to have an impact on what is happening in classrooms. They acknowledge that they still have much to do notably in relation to making sure that work set by teachers is appropriate for all students. The impact tracker used by these leaders to monitor and evaluate their work is an effective document and helping the school to identify the effectiveness of actions taken. The teaching and learning calendar of training activities shows the commitment of leaders to providing high quality professional development for all staff. It makes clear what is happening, when it is happening and why it is happening. The training offered links closely to performance management and all staff have a performance management target which is related to the area for improvement related to teaching. This approach helps to emphasise the importance of how improving teaching and learning will enable the school to make the improvements needed so that in time it will be judged to no longer require special measures.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Following the ratification of the new child protection and safeguarding policy and the review of the curriculum, much work has been undertaken to strengthen the schools' approach to promoting students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme covers all types of extremist behaviour and the school is tackling controversial and sensitive issues with all year groups. The intent to broaden students' knowledge and understanding of key issues is clear. However, the delivery by form tutors does not yet match the aspirations. Students bemoan the fact that there is often insufficient time in the morning tutor period to adequately discuss and reflect on what they are studying. They welcome the opportunities to learn about how to avoid risk but are disappointed that they do not necessarily study this theme in appropriate depth. Senior leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that all students receive high quality teaching in their PSHCE sessions. Nevertheless, the school is much more focussed upon protecting students from extreme and radical views and has provided initial training for all staff and students.

Students' behaviour around school and in lessons is generally calm and purposeful. The school buildings are difficult to navigate especially at break and lunch times. Corridors and stairs are narrow and there are numerous pressure points when

students converge from different directions. Nevertheless, students manage these potential hazards well. Students' misbehaviour is recorded but the analysis of that data to establish what is happening in different groups of students in different year groups, look for patterns, establish intervention strategies and identify creative solutions is not happening. For example, links between inadequate achievement in learning, unacceptable behaviour and poor attendance are not routinely explored.

Attendance is being rigorously monitored. Staff know the students who are persistently absent from school well. The school's own Education Welfare Officer is beginning to have an impact amongst those students who have low attendance records and their families. Regular reports are provided to the IEB on attendance but the data is analysed as a discreet set. Links with poor behaviour are not regularly made and the analyses accompanying the attendance data reports do not focus sufficiently upon the reasons for poor attendance and why it needs to improve. Students' attendance figures have declined this year and the proportion of students falling into the category of being persistent absentees has risen. This is disappointing and in part can be explained by the unsettled patterns of attendance of some of the students of East European ethnic heritage who have recently joined the school. Senior leaders know that improving attendance is a key issue. The attendance policy has been reviewed but not yet ratified by the IEB. Time would be well spent by members of the IEB in challenging senior leaders to consider patterns and trends across a range of data topics, including attendance, behaviour and achievement, and not just to look at individual data sets which are regarded as distinct and separate entities.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Following the previous monitoring inspection, senior leaders have acted swiftly to redraft the school improvement plan. It now provides clear milestones and quantifiable evaluation criteria against which progress can be measured. It covers all the areas for improvement and is being used as an effective working document to show progress against targets. The IEB has created its own monitoring and evaluation procedures for the improvement plan which focuses on impact and is updated on a regular basis. As a result, members of the IEB and the SSMG and senior leaders now have a more informed view as to who is responsible for leading specific improvements and how they are to be held accountable for their work.

The policy on child protection and safeguarding has been revised and ratified by the IEB. The previous policy was deficient because it failed to 'give necessary attention to potential risks posed by extremism'. This weakness has been remedied. The new policy sets out clearly how students and staff will be safeguarded through enhanced training which will help to increase their awareness of the dangers posed by extremism. A 'Getting on Together' training day and the introduction of specific units into the PSHCE curriculum are two ways in which this policy is being implemented. Students interviewed commented on how useful they had found the training day and

the work in PSHCE. As one Year 11 student said, 'it is helping us to be much more aware of the world beyond school'.

The review of the pupil premium has been undertaken and a number of recommendations made. Senior leaders have already started to take action on these recommendations. This specific work, though, is in its infancy. As a result, the impact of actions taken are not yet clear. The effectiveness of the school's work to support disadvantaged students will be a focus in future inspections.

Since the last monitoring inspection, the local authority has instituted reviews of the curriculum and safeguarding. The school has responded to the recommendations of both reviews. Senior leaders are aware of the importance of high quality PSHCE education for all students, of ensuring that all staff adhere to health and safety procedures, particularly in environments where practical work takes place, and of the need for on-going vigilance in relation to ensuring students are protected from the dangers posed by extremism.

Senior leaders are focused on bringing about improvements in leadership and management, teaching and learning and, ultimately, achievement as quickly as possible. They can articulate the actions so far undertaken and point to the impact of some of those actions, for example in relation to the work to improve teaching. Collaborative training sessions for all staff on Monday afternoons and bespoke support pathway packages for specific members of staff are helping to spread best practice and eradicate weaknesses in teaching. The impact of this work is carefully monitored and the regular collection of quantifiable and quantitative data, based on lesson observations, students' work scrutiny, and pupil progress data, is providing senior leaders with a clearer picture of the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

Whereas senior leaders are becoming more effective in their work as they evolve into a cohesive and established team, middle leaders are yet to achieve such consistency and impact. Middle leaders have clear priorities and are being held to account by their line managers. However, the effectiveness of the way in which they lead and manage their teams of staff is variable. Senior leaders acknowledge that improving the quality and impact of middle leadership is work in progress.

The work to improve communication with parents and to gather their views on a regular basis is progressing. Parent View (Ofsted's on-line parent questionnaire) has not been well used by parents. As a result, the school has instituted its own questionnaire and is taking the opportunity on Parents' Evenings to ask parents to answer a number of key questions at the end of their appointments with staff. This initiative is resulting in more parents giving their views, thus helping the school to be able to respond more effectively to their concerns. This approach has yet to be undertaken for all Parents' Evening events.

The establishment of the IEB has meant that the review of governance was delayed until the new body was well established. This has now happened. As a result, plans are being considered to hold a review of governance before the end of this academic year. The SSMG and the IEB have also begun to consider the most appropriate timing of the creation of a shadow governing body which in time will replace the current IEB. The SSMG meets every half term and is effectively holding the IEB to account. The IEB meets monthly and is providing essential support and challenge to the headteacher and his senior team. Members of the IEB have a clear grasp of the issues facing the school and are becoming more proactive in their work. They are knowledgeable about the actions taken to bring about improvement and the impact of this work. They are using their experience and skills judiciously to help the school to improve. Minutes of the most recent IEB meetings demonstrate their resolve to ensure that all staff are challenged to do their part to the best of their ability to help the school tackle successfully all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Since the last monitoring visit there has been much activity in tackling the areas for improvement and much has been accomplished. However, much has yet to be done. The school now needs to consolidate the improvement initiatives put in place over the last two terms and to redouble its efforts in relation to improving attendance and the depth of communication with parents and its local community.

External support

The school welcomes the challenge and support provided by the local authority's senior area achievement officer. The weakness in the local authority's statement of action identified at the previous monitoring inspection has been rectified. Staff are benefitting from a small number of external consultants, most of whom are focused currently in supporting teaching and learning in English.