

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566932

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: hcarnall@cfbt.com



27 February 2015

Ms Paula Ward
Headteacher
Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy
Broad Way
Pelsall
Walsall
WS4 1BW

Dear Ms Ward

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy

Following my visit with Alun Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector and Derek Barnes, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 25 and 26 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy 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:

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal from special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers, although I recommend that they are monitored and supported by leaders with a strong track record of teaching, coaching and mentoring.

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 Interim Executive Board, the Education Funding Agency and

Department for Education's Academies Advisers Unit, the Chief Executive of the Ormiston Academies Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Walsall.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to speed up the progress students make by:
 - setting tasks that are at the right level to get the best out of students, especially the most able
 - using questions in lessons that check students' understanding and develop in students the ability to think, reflect and communicate clearly
 - giving students clear and subject-specific feedback so that they know how to improve their work, and then making sure that students act upon this advice and guidance
 - providing opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills in all subjects, especially in writing.

- Improve students' achievement in mathematics by:
 - eradicating weaknesses in mathematics teaching
 - improving students' skills in carrying out calculations and their ability to use and apply number skills when solving problems
 - ensuring that students have opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.

- Ensure that all groups of students in the sixth form achieve well by:
 - checking students' progress more regularly and rigorously
 - reducing variations in students' progress through swift interventions to keep students on track
 - ensuring that teaching in the sixth form is consistently at least good across all subjects.

- Improve leadership and management, including governance by ensuring that leaders and governors:
 - have the skills and knowledge necessary to check the progress of all students accurately
 - communicate a greater sense of urgency by making sure plans to improve student progress are clearly focused on what will make the biggest difference to improving learning and teaching
 - incorporate into improvement plans some short- and medium-term milestones that can be used to measure success
 - regularly monitor the success of actions that have been put in place to raise standards, and challenge staff if progress falls below that which is expected
 - bring about rapid improvements in the learning and teaching of mathematics so that standards rise quickly and students make at least good progress

- consistently make judgements on the quality of teaching that take into account how well students are making progress
- tackle weaknesses in the provision for students who are most able and for those who are eligible for support through the pupil premium
- frequently check to see if the spending of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up grants are raising standards for disadvantaged students and for those falling behind their peers in English and mathematics
- undertake an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium grant, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

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

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 February 2015

Evidence

In addition to observing lessons, some of them jointly with senior leaders, inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leadership teams, as well as staff responsible for managing subjects or key stages. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), the Chair of the Progress Board and one of Ormiston Academies Trust's (OAT) Education Adviser. The focus of this monitoring inspection was the quality of teaching and its impact on the progress that pupils make in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. An inspector checked the single central record to ensure that the details for new staff have been added and that the academy complies with safeguarding and staff vetting procedures.

Context

There has been a significant turnover of staff since the academy's last monitoring inspection in October 2014. Fourteen teachers have left and nine have joined the academy. More teaching staff will be joining in April 2015.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The underachievement reported at the time of the academy's inspection in January 2014 that placed it in special measures is being reversed. Students' attainment remains below the national average, but indications for 2015 show that standards are rising securely on a more sustained and stable basis due to much improved teaching and strong leadership. As reported at the time of the last monitoring inspection in October 2014, the national GCSE results in 2014 were disappointing compared with the 2013 assessments. However, the majority of students in Year 11 who took the tests and those currently in Key Stage 4 made much more progress in relation to their starting points, compared with previous years.

In both English and mathematics, the proportion of students currently on course to make or exceed the expected rate of progress by the end of Key Stage 4, (at least three National Curriculum levels of progress) is higher than for previous years. The percentage of students on course to gain five A* to C grades (including English language and mathematics) at GCSE is rising. The academy continues to meet the national floor standards (these are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4).

Achievement gaps between disadvantaged students (those eligible for the pupil premium and known to be receiving free school meals or are in the care of the local authority) are narrowing in all year groups. Students with disabilities or who have special educational needs are achieving much better than previously. Special

educational needs provision is managed well and students who need the most support are receiving effective booster work and intervention programmes.

Students currently in Year 7 are making reasonable progress in relation to their very low starting points. The majority of students joining the academy in Year 7 start with skills and abilities in literacy and mathematics that are well below those expected for their age. This is the most significant barrier to learning for many students in Key Stage 3. Although leaders and staff are providing a range of appropriate interventions for students, such as accelerated reading programmes, some lessons do not focus sufficiently on improving the accuracy of students' speech, language and writing. In lessons where learning still requires improvement, students are not answering questions fully or speaking clearly and accurately. This affects their writing, which still includes unnecessary spelling and punctuation errors, and this also stifles their development and progress in reading. In the most effective lessons where students make good progress, teachers and support staff model accurate writing and expect full and accurate written answers or complete spoken responses during class or group discussions.

Students in the sixth form are making much better progress than previously. More effective teaching and consistent interventions in the sixth form are raising attainment and arresting any potential underachievement.

As reported in October 2014, students' achievement in science by the end of Key Stage 4 continues to improve very well. Standards in all disciplines of science at both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 are rising quickly and securely.

The quality of teaching

Staff changes and newly appointed teachers have strengthened teaching and learning. The learning observed in lessons, assessments of students' progress and the quality of work seen in books show that the amount of teaching that is inadequate or requires improvement is reducing and the proportion of teaching that is good or better is increasing well. The teaching in the sixth form continues to improve very well and is resulting in a sustained rise in student achievement.

Teachers and leaders make accurate assessments of students' progress and attainment. The systems used to manage this information are well established and accessible to staff and leaders. Teachers use assessment information to group students by ability. However, in Key Stage 3, the range of abilities in some classes is too wide, making it difficult for teachers to prepare tasks that meet the needs of all students. This particularly affects the most able students and those who are close to reaching age-related levels, as they do not always start work that is challenging enough to extend their learning. For students who find learning difficult or who have special educational needs, teachers and support staff usually provide the right level of work and interventions to meet their needs.

In some lessons there is ineffective use made of learning support staff as they do not always intervene enough to support students. Some workbooks show that students repeat unnecessary errors when adults do not help them understand the reasons for their mistakes. In lessons where students' learning slows, teachers and support staff too readily accept inaccurate writing or incomplete responses to questions during discussions.

When students write extended pieces of work, or attempt to calculate problems in mathematics, the most effective teaching ensures that errors are addressed while students work and new learning is fresh in their minds. During this inspection, students who answered questions clearly and accurately often referred to notes on white boards or in their workbooks. This helped them to set out their ideas logically or sequentially, before responding orally or in writing in complete and accurate sentences. However, this good practice is not consistent across classes. In some of the most effective writing lessons observed, for example, very good use was made of pre-prepared writing frames for students who find writing independently a challenge. These help students to structure and set out their ideas before editing and improving their writing. In lessons where students' learning slows or requires improvement, the structure of writing, including handwriting, is inconsistent and corrections are not always being pointed out to students.

There have been good improvements to teachers' marking. Students have accurate measures of success against individualised learning targets pasted into books. These help them work towards higher levels and to understand the next steps in their learning. Mathematics teaching is improving very well. Teachers are increasingly using marking to provide clear pointers for improvement that include both strengths and weaknesses to help students work towards or exceed their target grades or levels.

Behaviour and safety of students

Students continue to behave well. They are polite and attentive in lessons and when moving between sessions. Students show consideration and respect for students with disabilities. Even though, as some have stated, there are more rules and higher expectations, they can see that this is for the better as they are expected to work hard and achieve well. The academy provides good opportunities for students to build character and contribute to the local and wider community. The successful sporting academy and its facilities, together with a highly competent staff team, produces well-rounded, confident and highly skilled students, some of whom go on to sporting excellence or gain sporting scholarships and GCSE qualifications in physical education. Students in the sixth form are engaged and are very proud of their achievements. They say that they feel valued and respected by staff. Relationships between students, students and staff are very good throughout the academy.

Students told inspectors that they are expected to work hard, be respectful and tolerant of others and achieve as much as they can. Sixth form students told an inspector that they respect and admire all their teachers and support staff because they enable them to gain qualifications to go on to further and higher education or training and employment. Expectations and aspirations are rising across the academy. At the time of the inspection, Key Stage 3 students were participating in a project entitled 'Human Utopia'. This involves a group of external consultants working with students for three days, raising aspirations and offering time and space to reflect on themselves and their personal qualities. This project is having a positive effect on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In lessons students debate, discuss and share ideas, although there are occasions when students do not express themselves confidently or accurately. This is because teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to organise their thinking or provide coherent and accurate responses, both orally and in writing.

Leaders and teachers are increasingly providing lessons that hold students' interests and enthusiasm. As a result, there is very little disruptive or off-task behaviour and the rates of supervised seclusion or withdrawal from lessons, as well as temporary exclusions, are low and reducing. Attendance is in line with the national average. Persistent absence rates are reducing very well and students are usually punctual and ready for lessons or for any off-site provision, including work-related provision and educational visits.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The Principal and senior leadership team, together with the IEB have secured key appointments of leaders and teachers that have strengthened teaching across the academy. This has led to demonstrable evidence of improvement to students' achievement in all year groups.

The Principal has worked tirelessly and effectively with the IEB to resolve some difficult staffing issues. The senior leadership team, IEB and Progress Board now have a secure platform for more sustained improvement. There are more clearly defined management roles and responsibilities so that the most effective teachers and leaders influence the work of other staff to improve their practice. Leaders monitor lessons and students' work robustly to make sure that any students who are at risk of falling behind are identified sooner so that intervention programmes help them to catch up. Regular book reviews, learning walks and lesson visits undertaken by senior leaders, mean that teachers are more accountable and are much clearer about what outcomes to expect from lessons to sustain good rates of progress.

Staff appointments and changes to staffing and management roles are building further capacity for sustained improvement. Having eliminated most weak or

inadequate teaching, leaders are now increasing the pace of improvement. There are challenging targets in the academy's action plans for teachers and support staff to aim for. Staff morale is high and everyone is pulling together because the staff feel valued, trusted and empowered to take on more responsibilities.

The IEB has advanced transitional plans to establish a full local governing board (LGB). Following a recent skills audit, a suitable candidate has been appointed to Chair the LGB and there are plans in place to appoint further governors to join the board. This will be taking greater responsibility for gathering first-hand evidence to hold the academy's leaders and staff more to account for students' progress and performance. Both the IEB's and Progress Board's minutes and reports show good rates of progress in teaching and learning which is corroborated by accurate assessment and performance data. A recent inspection by officers from the Department for Education also confirmed that the academy is building good capacity for sustained improvement to students' achievement and the quality of teaching.

As reported at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, there has been sustained improvement to leadership and teaching in the sixth form. Students receive good quality information, advice and guidance. Their achievement is improving well and the post-16 pathways and the opportunities provided for education, employment or training are increasing well. An increasing number of students are going to university or college and there has also been a significant increase in the proportion of students who are the first generation in their families to go on to higher or further education.

The leadership of some key departments remains strong, such as the physical education department and sports academy, as well as the science, modern foreign languages and information technology departments.

The academy's single central record, staff vetting and safe recruitment policies and practices continue to comply with statutory requirements.

External support

The IEB and OAT progress board undertake regular and accurate reviews of the academy's progress and provide leaders with a focus for sustained improvement to teaching and learning. The support provided by the sponsor and the Education Advisor, they have appointed, has been effective and further links with schools, including teaching school alliances, have the potential to provide more opportunities for teachers and support staff to see and share good practice.