

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9162
Direct email: peter.willetts@serco.com



10 March 2015

Mr Scott Preston
Executive Principal
Ernulf Academy
Barford Road
Eynesbury
St Neots
PE19 2SH

Dear Mr Preston

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ernulf Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 9 March 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The academy should take immediate action to:

- move quickly to strengthen the teaching of modern foreign languages (MFL) and science
- act more dynamically to raise the expectations among students and teachers of what constitutes good behaviour in MFL and some science lessons
- raise the expectations of what students can achieve in mathematics, MFL and science
- drive up the achievement of disadvantaged students.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, three other leaders, students, four members of the governing body and the Executive Principal from Longsands Academy which is also part of The St Neots Learning Partnership. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. A number of short visits to mathematics, science and MFL lessons were undertaken.

Main findings

You and the governors have plans to improve the teaching of MFL and some science lessons. However, this is not being carried out with sufficient urgency. The plans appear unlikely to improve the very weak teaching until September 2015. Because the teaching is poor, the students spoken to report that they do not value learning French and they appear bored in lessons. This is very disappointing, as these students also say that they are unlikely to pursue a further course in MFL. Your work to strengthen the quality of teaching in mathematics is more successful. Most students were observed working hard in these lessons.

In a number of the lessons visited we witnessed examples of poor behaviour which the teachers did not manage well enough. This ranged from apathy and boredom to backchat and rudeness to the teacher that resulted in other students being distracted from their work. Senior leaders are not tackling these incidents of misbehaviour well enough or holding teachers to account for managing behaviour with enough rigour. For example, the new system for monitoring behaviour looks promising, but following one example of poor behaviour, you reported that the teacher concerned may not record this using the procedures agreed. This indicates that there are still teachers that do not adhere to school policy which undermines the planned improvements to behaviour management.

Students do not have high enough expectations about what they can achieve in mathematics, science and MFL. For example, most of the students spoken to reported that they are content to gain a grade C in their GCSE exams, even though they may be capable of achieving higher grades. There are indications that this culture of low aspirations is also prevalent among some parents and teachers. For example, records of assessment show that some students have the targets to gain a grade E, which is not aspirational enough for them. Some students reported that their parents were content that they just passed their exams. The attendance of between 50 and 60% of parents at parents evenings also indicates that there is more that the school needs to do to engage parents in taking shared responsibility for their children's education.

You and the governors have been conscientious in arranging an external review of the use of the pupil premium funding. The findings of this now need to be used with some urgency to establish a plan to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students.

Governors are not given sufficient information to enable them to make strategic judgements about whether the actions that are taken for school improvement are having the required impact on students' outcomes. For example, the school action plan lists the priorities for improvement identified at the last inspection, but it is not at all clear what the desired impact on students' outcomes will be as a result of the planned actions.

External support

Your partnership work with Longsands Academy has strengthened teaching for some subjects through the introduced mentoring and coaching schemes. It has not had sufficient impact on teaching and behaviour management in MFL or science.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector