

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566863

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** [jbennett@cfbt.com](mailto:jbennett@cfbt.com)



23 March 2015

Mrs Helen McEvoy  
Graham School Science College  
Woodlands Drive  
Scarborough  
North Yorkshire  
YO12 6QW

Dear Mrs McEvoy

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Graham School Science College**

Following my visit with, Steven Goldsmith, additional inspector and Sophie Gillies, additional inspector to your school on 19 and 20 March, 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013. 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 local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint up to three newly qualified teachers with specialisms in English, mathematics and geography before the next visit.

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2013**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables students to reach higher standards and achieve well, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - plan and set work that matches the needs and abilities of students
  - have high expectations of what students can achieve
  - challenge the most able students more effectively so that they make better progress
  - focus on helping students to practise, develop and improve their literacy and presentation skills
  - plan interesting lessons that motivate students to learn well and to improve their behaviour
  - mark students' work regularly and provide specific advice on how they can make improvements
  - require their students to act upon the advice given in marking
  - question skilfully in lessons to check how well students understand their work and to push their learning on further
  - manage more effectively the learning of students with special educational needs and those eligible for support through the pupil premium so they can all make at least good progress.
  
- Improve students' behaviour and safety, by:
  - managing behaviour more consistently to improve students' attitudes to learning and to reduce the number of exclusions
  - ensuring that all groups of students attend school regularly so they do not miss learning time
  - improving students' attendance at school; in particular, the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for support through the pupil premium.
  
- Ensure that senior leaders and governors drive improvement effectively, by:
  - focusing relentlessly on developing the quality of teaching and learning and improving the standard of students' behaviour
  - eradicating teaching that presently requires improvement or is inadequate
  - ensuring that all subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching accurately and link it securely to students' progress
  - making sure that all subject leaders provide accurate assessment information to senior leaders so that underachieving students can be identified swiftly and appropriate action taken to improve their learning

- using performance management to hold all staff to account for their responsibilities in order to drive up achievement and improve students' behaviour
- taking swift action should the work of senior leaders, subject leaders and year group leaders fail to bring about rapid improvements in students' achievement and behaviour
- ensuring that pupil premium funding is used effectively to overcome barriers to developing higher standards and better behaviour
- ensuring that the school's information on attendance and exclusions can be compared to national statistics very readily so that weaknesses can be identified and greater challenge and focus can be given to particular groups of students
- ensuring that governors hold the headteacher to account much more effectively for the quality of teaching, students' achievement and their behaviour.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 19 – 20 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors made 33 visits to lessons taught by 33 different teachers. A deputy headteacher accompanied an inspector on one of these visits and the local authority lead adviser accompanied an inspector on two of these visits. Inspectors observed students' behaviour in lessons, as students moved between lessons and during lunch and break times. Formal and informal discussions were held with students from Years 7 to 11. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other staff, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors analysed student progress data, attendance records, behaviour and incident logs and looked at a range of other documentation, including the school's improvement plans, monitoring and evaluation records, reports of visits by the local authority, safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection in November 2014, one member of staff has left the school. Staff absence rates have reduced substantially, although a small number of staff are currently on long term absence. In January 2015, four new teachers and two assistant head teachers joined the school. Two heads of department have been appointed and will take up their posts later in the year.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

School leaders are confident that their projections for students' achievement at the end of 2014/15 are accurate. Reliable school data confirm that more students throughout the school are set to achieve their individual targets. The improvements seen in students' achievement in Key Stage 3 at the last visit continue to gather pace. The decisive actions being taken are also now beginning to have an impact on students' attainment and progress in Key Stage 4. As a result, modest improvements in the proportion of students obtaining five or more good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 are predicted. Year 10 tracking information indicates notable improvements in students' overall attainment and shows accelerated progress in English and mathematics. There are clear signs that more effective teaching and support strategies are beginning to improve outcomes for students who are disabled or have special educational needs.

Within this more positive picture of rising standards and accelerating progress, the performance of those students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding shows little sign of improvement. Gaps in the achievement and progress of different groups of students persist. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what actions need to be taken. The appointment of an assistant

headteacher with responsibility for pupil premium students and narrowing performance gaps, provides the additional leadership capacity needed to drive forward this aspect of the school's improvement work at a faster rate.

### **The quality of teaching**

Students are beginning to achieve more over time, because they are making better progress in more lessons and subjects than was previously the case. This is because of improvements in the quality of teaching. From the school's own monitoring evidence, the proportion of teaching that is good or better continues to increase in most departments. Students say that they are provided more frequently with interesting activities in lessons and are clear that this is engaging them much more in their learning. Regular, sharply focused student performance meetings hold staff to account for individual student outcomes and are ensuring that appropriate student support is being put into place more quickly than was previously the case.

Inspectors' observations and learning walks identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching that closely matched those identified by senior leaders own observations. Inspectors noted an increased pace in students' learning, some skilful questioning used to engage students and check out their understanding as the lesson progresses, and more attention given to meeting the needs of different students in the class. The quality of marking and feedback is improving, and evidence seen during this monitoring inspection confirms most teachers are following the school's marking policy.

Teaching staff and teaching assistants continue to access a good range of professional development. Activities are tailored to meet the schools priorities and individual development needs. The impact of these activities can be seen in the improvements that are being secured in the quality and consistency of teaching and outcomes for students.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In lessons and around the school, almost all students are polite and well-mannered and have positive attitudes to adults and one another. Students generally listen well to the teacher's instructions, work sensibly with each other and independently, and comment sensitively and maturely when peer assessing their classmates work. Feedback is sought from students regularly and this indicates that most students feel that behaviour is improving. Students say they feel safe and inspectors agree. They show a good understanding of risk, including using the internet.

Senior leaders' actions to improve students' behaviour and the consistent management of the 'behaviour pathway' are making a strong contribution to the improvements seen in students' learning and progress. An assistant headteacher has

been appointed with responsibility for improving attitudes to learning. A system to monitor and track students' attitudes to learning alongside their academic outcomes has been introduced. Tracking information confirms that most students are developing more positive attitudes to their learning. Students report that the changes have helped them to gain an increased understanding of their individual targets and current grades. Students told inspectors they routinely update their achievements, comment on the progress they are making towards their goals in their 'planners', and share this information with their parents. Students value this increased responsibility for their own learning and the informed discussions they have with their teachers about their progress and next steps, and it is clear that this is enthusing most students and motivating them to achieve.

Despite these positive improvements, a small minority of students continue to display poor attitudes to learning and school. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 4, where a small minority of students are intent on challenging the changes that are being implemented and the higher expectations that have been set for their behaviour. School leaders are taking a robust approach and sending out clear messages that disruption to lessons and poor behaviour around the school will not be tolerated. One consequence of this has been a sharp rise in the use of fixed term exclusions this term. Improvements in the overall attendance rate are being sustained and this remains close to the national average for secondary schools; despite the impact of the increase in fixed term exclusions and the low attendance of a small minority of students.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Clear and incisive leadership and management underpin all of the improvements that have been secured. During this visit, the staff and students inspectors spoke with were much more enthusiastic about the changes being made and the school's progress to date. Several individuals provided compelling evidence and examples of the positive difference this had made for them personally.

The increased capacity that the two new assistant headteachers bring is helping to secure more rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work, most notably in tackling previous underachievement, narrowing performance gaps and ensuring all students are helped to reach their potential. Middle leaders are proving increasingly effective in monitoring and evaluating the performance of their areas of work. They are provided with detailed and reliable assessment and tracking data and a range of effective systems, procedures and policies in order to undertake their roles. Performance management arrangements for staff are in place and linked closely to students' achievements. Teachers are sharpening their use of tracking data and other information and are using this more effectively to inform their planning and engage students in discussions about their individual learning and progress.

Great strides forward have been taken to secure more stable staffing and ensure that students throughout the school are provided with fewer interruptions to their learning as a result of staffing difficulties. Since the start of the current academic year, 21 new members of staff have joined the school, and two more have been appointed and are set to start of the summer term. This equates to a change in around a third of the staff team in the year to date. These changes are demonstrably helping to bring about the gains in student achievement and the quality of teaching and learning seen at this visit. Senior leaders are committing time and resources appropriately in order to ensure these staff are supported and integrated well and brought swiftly up to speed with the school's systems, procedures and expectations.

Members of the governing body have a wealth of knowledge and experience. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of their strategic role in running the school and provide good levels of challenge and support. Senior leaders and governors have acted astutely and wisely in order to complete the much needed staff restructuring and recruitment process and bring about a more secure financial position for the school as quickly as possible. Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and meet current requirements.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing effective support for the school. Local authority officers are working closely with senior leaders and departmental teams to bring about improvements in teaching and learning through activities such as joint learning walks and subject specific staff training events. Valuable support has also been provided in relation to advice regarding human resources and financial matters. Teachers and teaching assistants continue to benefit from local partnerships through conducting joint reviews and evaluation of students' work, and sharing expertise and developing best practice with their colleagues at King James', Nunthorpe and Stokesley.