

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 9161
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



16 June 2015

Robert Sloan
Charles Read Academy
Bourne Road
Corby Glen
Grantham
NG33 4NT

Dear Mr Sloan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Charles Read Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 15 June 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 February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the academy was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve the school, particularly those related to teaching assistants, subject leaders and the most able students
- amend the academy action plan so that it makes the role of governors clear and includes, where possible, specific dates of monitoring and evaluation activities.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the Principal, other senior leaders, three governors, four members of staff, four students and a representative of the sponsor to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school

improvement plan. You took me on a tour of the academy and we saw the learning that was taking place in every classroom.

Context

One teacher of technology has left since the academy's most recent section 5 inspection. Five more teachers will leave at the end of this term. Five teachers will join the academy in September, including a new head of mathematics and a lead teacher for science and technology. This represents significant change as this is approximately half the number of this small academy's teaching staff.

Main findings

In-school data show that students are making increased rates of progress though this is more consistent in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. You and your colleagues have provided considerable extra support for the academy's Year 11 students. This is not limited to extra sessions during lunchtimes and after school; a programme of activity has been available in each half-term holiday since October and teachers even came into school to offer help on the most recent Bank Holiday. This is an indication of the increased expectations you have of your students and your teachers. You are leading by example in teaching mathematics, including to students at risk of underachievement. Senior leaders are also teaching in their areas of specialism. Students interviewed appreciate the level of support that is available.

You have held teachers to account more closely for students' achievement. In order to help you do this you have invested in a software package to track students' progress more closely. Senior leaders and governors are now better informed and teachers can use this information to better meet the needs of students through lesson planning, though it is too early to judge the impact of this.

Members of staff interviewed feel that a culture of improving the quality of teaching is beginning to develop in the academy. You have ensured teachers have, where necessary, received support to improve their practice. More teachers are taking advantage of weekly opportunities to share ideas. Teachers have benefitted from observing colleagues both in their own school and in the sponsor's other academies. Teachers are also developing links with colleagues from other schools. This is potentially of great value as Charles Read Academy has such a small teaching staff.

You and your senior leaders have organised a variety of professional development activities. However, the impact of the many activities taking place is unclear and they need to be evaluated more formally. This is particularly the case of strategies used to improve the outcomes for more-able students. It is still unclear whether teachers are consistently and fully informing teaching assistants of their role in improving students' outcomes. The documentation to reflect the impact of subject leaders varies in quality across the academy, though you have plans in place to improve this from September.

The quality of written feedback that teachers give to their students has improved and students now regularly respond to it, though you believe the consistency can be further improved; you are working towards this, particularly by establishing a common approach.

Governors, in conjunction with the academy's senior leaders, had identified several areas for improvement at the beginning of the year and the accuracy of these was confirmed through the recent inspection. Shortly after the inspection, the full governing body met to discuss the findings with a representative of the academy sponsor. Some governors have recently had training on student progress data to improve their knowledge of this area. The Chair of the Governing Body has been involved in staff recruitment in order to become better informed about the quality of teaching. This governor meets representatives of the academy sponsor on a monthly basis to review the progress being made. Although governors feature in the academy's improvement plan, their involvement could be made clearer by linking named individuals to specific actions.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The representative of the academy sponsor supports and challenges the Principal. The sponsor has promoted activities to raise the aspirations of students including helping to organise trips to universities. The sponsor has made a significant contribution to improving facilities in the school, most notably through the building of an all-weather sports pitch which opened after the recent inspection. Academy members of staff have also benefitted from human resources and IT support. Following the inspection, the sponsor's representative worked with the governing body to improve their understanding of what is required for an academy to be judged as outstanding. This representative gathered opinions on the academy's performance from every student in the school which has helped senior leaders identify what is working well.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Department of Education