

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



15 June 2015

Mr Trevor Dunn

Acting Headteacher

Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise

Bracken Court

Ushaw Moor

Durham

DH7 7NG

Dear Mr Dunn

Special measures monitoring inspection of Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise

Following my visit with Steven Goldsmith, Additional Inspector, to your college on 11 and 12 June 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 college's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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 college is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The college may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Corporate Director: Children's and Adults' Services for Durham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise achievement, especially in mathematics, science and the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - the progress made by different groups of students is accurately and regularly checked
 - students' work is accurately assessed and new work enables all groups of students to make rapid progress
 - teachers demand consistently high standards of work from their students
 - all marking and feedback gives helpful guidance by showing students precisely what they must do to improve their work and ensuring they act upon this advice quickly.

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that improvement is driven forward rapidly by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders are capable of delivering improvement priorities
 - establishing robust systems to check and evaluate the college's work accurately and ensuring that the outcomes are used consistently by all senior and middle leaders and managers to make rapid improvements
 - ensuring that leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching give high regard to the standards of students' work over time and published performance data on progress and attainment
 - checking that students who are supported by the government's pupil premium funding receive high calibre support that accelerates their progress
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the senior leaders and managers to account for all aspects of the college's performance.

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 pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 and 12 June 2015

Evidence

During this inspection meetings were held with the acting headteacher and other senior leaders, two members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) of governors, the national leader of education (NLE) supporting the college, and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met with middle leaders and a meeting was held with the college staff. Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons and part lessons in a range of subjects across the age range of the college and observed the work of the inclusion unit. College documentation, including department reviews, records of observations of teaching, attendance and exclusions data, and the single central record, which contains checks on the appointment of staff, was reviewed.

Context

Durham Community Business College is part of a federation with a local secondary school. The Chief Executive of the college is currently not at work. An acting headteacher has oversight of the two colleges with a head of college taking responsibility for the day-to-day work of each. The governing body has been replaced by an IEB and a NLE has been appointed to support leadership within the college. The current head of science is not at work. A major restructuring of the senior leadership team of the two colleges in the federation will take effect from September. A part-time acting deputy headteacher will take up post along with an acting head of science at this time. Plans for the college to become an academy are under consideration.

Achievement of pupils at the school

A more rigorous system for collecting and analysing information about students' progress is in place and senior leaders are confident that the data they hold on the progress of students in Key Stage 4 is now accurate. Assessments are analysed and checked more rigorously and, as a consequence, the college has been able to intervene rapidly when students have not achieved as well as expected. However, leaders are less confident about the accuracy of assessments in Key Stage 3, as these continue to show wide variations in rates of progress across different subjects.

As a result of this work, together with some improvements in teaching, the most recent college assessments suggest that examination results in 2015 will be slightly better than those achieved in 2014, with a significant improvement predicted in English and greater improvements overall in 2016. However, student progress varies across subjects and is still weaker in mathematics, in science and in the humanities. A significant gap remains between the attainment of disadvantaged students and that of their peers. Good and better progress was evident in a number of lessons observed by inspectors, but this is not yet the case in all classes. In particular, the promotion of literacy across the curriculum remains too variable.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has been a major focus for improvement in the college and in some areas this work is starting to have an impact on the progress of students. The expectations of many teachers have been raised and in the best learning seen students' attitudes towards their learning are good. Where weaker learning occurs it is characterised by a lack of pace and challenge, insufficient adaptation of tasks to meet the needs of students of different abilities, and weaknesses in spoken grammar being unchallenged so that students do not become confident users of standard English.

The college has developed a far more rigorous system for collecting and analysing data about students' progress. The accuracy of teacher assessment has improved following training from the local authority and teachers are now more aware of data relating to students' progress and are mindful of the different groups of students in their classes. In the lessons where good and better learning takes place, teachers plan activities that meet the needs of different students, but this is not yet consistent through all subject areas and year groups. In some lessons activities are still pitched at a low level and do not challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject.

The quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking are improving. Work in students' books shows that many students take more pride in their presentation and some respond enthusiastically to the marking and feedback they receive. However, these improvements are inconsistent across subjects. More needs to be done to embed these developments and make sure that best practice in teaching is spread across the college.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Rates of attendance have improved since the college introduced more robust tracking systems and tighter procedures for dealing with absence. The awareness of the importance of good attendance among students has been raised throughout the college. Parents of absent students are contacted promptly by a telephone call or text and the college has worked with students and their parents on an individual basis to offer targeted support with appropriate rewards as attendance improves. This work has led to persistent absence declining significantly since the inspection. More effective and personalised support work with students has also reduced the rate of fixed-term exclusions.

The majority of the students are keen to learn and instances of low-level disruption are declining as the quality of teaching improves. The number of students who spend time in the college inclusion suite is falling as teaching and support improve.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The acting headteacher has received extensive high quality support from the local authority and the NLE. Senior leaders from Parkside Academy, a local outstanding

school, have supported the development of a more robust system for collecting and analysing data about students' progress. This information is more accurate than that used historically and has allowed college leaders and teachers to intervene speedily where underperformance is noted. Middle leaders have received effective training from the local authority to improve the accuracy of student assessment, allowing teachers to provide targeted support where required. This work is beginning to have a positive impact on the achievement of all students.

The local authority, along with leaders from Parkside Academy, has carried out a detailed review of each subject department in the college. These reports have been used by department heads to create subject improvement plans. These plans vary in quality; the best include milestones from which progress in improvements can be assessed, whereas weaker plans are more descriptive and concentrate on process rather than focusing on achieving better outcomes for students.

A number of teachers have benefitted from attending the improving or outstanding teaching programmes organised by St John's School and Sixth Form College. However, college leaders have not yet securely driven whole-college improvements in teaching. Lesson observations are completed regularly but the evidence derived from the monitoring of teaching quality has not been used to secure whole-college improvements in teaching. Middle leaders are benefiting from training to enable them to both support and challenge members of staff but need to be given further responsibility for driving the improvement in the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility.

The local authority has appointed an IEB and so the external review of governance has not been required. The new governors have considerable expertise, are knowledgeable about the college and understand the challenges it faces. Minutes of their meetings confirm that they challenge college leaders and hold them to account. They ask demanding questions which are increasingly directed on the impact of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and address underachievement. The review of the college's use of pupil premium funding recommended at the last section 5 inspection has been completed.

External support

The local authority has brokered extensive support from a NLE and senior leaders from her school to support leadership and increase the capacity of senior and middle leaders to initiate, monitor and evaluate college improvement. A college scrutiny group, including the NLE, representatives of the local authority and college governors, meets regularly to support and challenge senior and middle leaders.