

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mark Patterson
Headteacher
Coleridge Community College
Radegund Road
Cambridge
CB1 3RJ

Dear Mr Patterson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coleridge Community College

Following my visit to your academy on 3 December 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 school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school 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 in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the multi-academy trust (MAT) of which your academy is a member, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. Brief visits to a number of lessons were made with you, and pupils' work was examined.

Context

You took up leadership of this school in September 2015. At the same time, an additional assistant headteacher was appointed with responsibility for the

achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This monitoring inspection had a particular focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Main findings

Examination results in summer 2015 showed a marked decline on those for 2014. Pupils taking GCSEs made too little progress from their starting points when joining the academy. This was especially true for disadvantaged pupils. The gap between the results of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils was too large, representing around two GCSE grades on average. Overall in the academy, fewer than average proportions of pupils made expected progress in either English or in mathematics, with the proportions of disadvantaged pupils making expected progress being much lower than other pupils.

You bring experience of successful school leadership and a clear vision for the academy's rapid improvement. You have brought clarity to what needs to be done. Your improvement plan is clear and concise, although some aspects would benefit from milestones to enable leaders and governors to check that you are on track. Your plan correctly identifies the key priorities of improving pupil progress by improving teaching and improving behaviour. Working with other senior leaders, you have ensured that staff are aware of the urgency and enormity of the task of rapid improvement facing the academy. You have a clear map for raising the quality of teaching. This is grounded in the outcomes of published research. A working group involving teachers from across the school is driving this process. Our tour of the school demonstrated that there are a number of passionate and inspirational teachers who are effective role models.

Governors are now much more clearly focused on pupil achievement and, in particular, the progress of different groups, including disadvantaged pupils. They were shocked by the summer results and realise that in the past there was insufficient challenge for leaders. They are now more rigorous in asking challenging questions and analysing information. A large portion of pupil premium money has been used to fund additional staffing to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils' achievement, comprising an intervention teacher for English and one for mathematics and the additional assistant headteacher. The governing body has been reorganised to align its monitoring with the academy's key priorities. The governing body's new data committee gives governors greater knowledge of the progress of identified groups, including disadvantaged pupils.

The newly appointed assistant headteacher is incorporating proven processes to support disadvantaged pupils. He has been appointed from another school in the MAT where the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is a success. His approach is based on what has been successful at his previous school and published research into successful methods of improving achievement for this group.

Your academy recognises that attendance needs to improve, especially for disadvantaged pupils. You have activities to try to address this such as the 'breakfast club', but you recognise that more needs to be done in this area. Your academy is now focused on identifying and then tackling the barriers to progress for your disadvantaged pupils.

You have improved the academy's use of information about pupils' progress. This information is now used forensically. The tracking of pupils' progress is now part of a rigorous system that was not in place at the time of the previous inspection or previous monitoring visit. Individual discussions between pupils and staff about pupils' progress are becoming regular.

Since Ofsted's previous monitoring, the academy has received an external review of the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium. This review concluded that 'there has been a great deal of improvement in the way the school approaches the needs of its Pupil Premium pupils and the appointment of a senior leader with responsibility for this area is both a positive step in itself and a clear signal of intent to the rest of the school community'.

Overall, you have taken major steps forward in improving the academy's provision in general and for disadvantaged pupils in particular, over the last three months, but you recognise that there are just 20 school weeks to demonstrate the impact of your work to improve the life chances of your pupils.

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 school receives considerable support from the MAT, not least in the appointment of key staff. The MAT partnership with Parkside Academy is now becoming more productive as you work with the executive principal. Partnership systems that have proved successful in the executive principal's other school are now being implemented. A representative of the office of the regional schools' commissioner has visited and provided some support; the local authority has also linked the school with others for mutual support and challenge.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the executive principal of the MAT and the academies unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector