

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



7 March 2016

Mr Craig D’Cunha
Principal
Chantry Academy
Mallard Way
Ipswich
IP2 9LR

Dear Mr D’Cunha

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chantry Academy

Following my visit with Kathryn Herlock, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 23–24 February 2016, 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 that 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 that took place in December 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement that 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children’s Services for Suffolk County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lawrence
Ofsted Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in December 2014.

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly of the most able pupils, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of how much pupils can achieve, how well they should present their work and their standards of behaviour, especially in mathematics
 - focusing more closely on helping pupils to acquire and use the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy, and ensuring that these skills are taught in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - marking pupils' work in such a way that they are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve it.
- Revise the curriculum in order to:
 - ensure there is sufficient time allocated for the core subjects of English and mathematics
 - provide a curriculum that builds upon pupils' prior knowledge and skills, especially in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the behaviour and attendance of pupils by:
 - eradicating poor behaviour in lessons to ensure that pupils' opportunities to learn are not compromised through noisy and persistent disruption
 - all staff challenging poor behaviour around the academy and dealing with it according to the academy's agreed procedures
 - developing systems to encourage good attendance.
- Revise the performance management programme within the academy to ensure that all teachers have clear targets that relate to the success of their pupils so that they can be held to account for their pupils' achievement.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing robust systems for reviewing and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to provide leaders with a clear and accurate picture of the academy's effectiveness
 - using the results of these evaluations to draw up sharply focused plans for improvement.
- Communicate more effectively with parents and take action to restore their confidence in the academy.
- Make more effective use of the pupil premium funds to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of governance, including the academy's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 23–24 February 2016

Evidence

During the inspection, inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised school documents and met with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the sponsoring trust. Inspectors considered 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, new heads of department in mathematics and communication technology (ICT) have been appointed. One teacher of mathematics has left the school. The senior leadership team has been extended by the fixed-term internal appointment of two associate assistant principals, who will also continue with their middle leadership responsibilities. The number of pupils on the school's roll has increased.

Outcomes for pupils

Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken by inspectors confirm that overall standards have continued to rise since the last monitoring inspection. School leaders' assessment of current standards of achievement at Key Stage 4 suggests that Year 11 pupils will make considerably more progress from their starting points in 2016 than they did in 2015. The school has continued to intensify the amount of internal testing and external moderation of work it carries out in order to validate current standards and to inform projections of future performance. In some important subjects, such as English, there is a strong correlation between the current standards achieved by pupils in Year 11 and the final grades that are predicted for them. However, in others, such as mathematics and science, pupils need to make more rapid progress to achieve their projected final outcomes.

The school has continued to enhance its support for disadvantaged pupils. School leaders predict that this will lead to a slight narrowing of the gap between the performance of these pupils and their peers this year, and a further narrowing in 2017. The school has also focused on improving the performance of boys who join the school with attainment which is in line with the national average. This is starting to have an impact in some year groups. However, the achievement of this group is still a factor in hindering the overall achievement of pupils in the current Year 10. As a result, progress in this year group is not as strong as it is in the current Year 11.

School leaders have not monitored the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs or disability thoroughly enough. As a result, there is insufficient

understanding within the school about the progress that is being made by these pupils.

Teachers have improved their understanding of the new assessment system recently introduced at Key Stage 3 and, consequently, the school is gaining an increasingly accurate picture of achievement in the lower school. The rate of progress that pupils are making in Years 7, 8 and 9 is accelerating in all three years. This means that in Year 7 the progress that has been made by pupils overall is above what can reasonably be expected. However, the progress made by pupils in Year 9 has not been rapid enough to make up for the legacy of previously inadequate teaching and, as a result, the overall progress they have made since joining the school is considerably below that expected of similar pupils nationally.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching has continued to improve. Classrooms are increasingly calm and orderly environments and, as a result, teachers are raising their expectation of the amount of work that can be completed within lessons. They consistently ensure that pupils' written records of their work are well presented, thorough and will provide a solid basis for future revision. Marking regularly provides written advice or guidance in line with the school's expectations. However, it is often not specific enough to improve subject knowledge, understanding or skills.

Some teachers have taken advantage of the improved learning environment to extend the variety of approaches to learning that they deploy, and this has helped to motivate pupils. However, overall, progress is not as rapid as it could be because teachers have continued to rely too heavily on highly structured tasks which do not give pupils the opportunity to develop important learning skills such as analysis, evaluation and problem solving.

The teaching of mathematics is improving, although the rate of improvement has not been as rapid as in some other subject areas, largely due to changes in staffing. The school has introduced a range of interventions and support in addition to normal lessons to ensure that pupils, particularly in Year 11, make the progress they should. The teaching of numeracy skills across the curriculum in other subjects is not as well developed as it is for literacy.

School leaders have established a thorough programme of training for staff which is contributing to the improvement in the overall standard of teaching. A significant number of teachers have been involved in undertaking classroom-based action research projects which have helped them reflect on their practice. Teachers are encouraged to share good practice at fortnightly breakfast sessions and termly 'teach-meets'. Structured support plans are in place to improve the practice of those staff whose teaching is not yet consistently effective.

The school has not developed effective procedures for ensuring that homework contributes successfully to learning. Some pupils say that they find it difficult to access the online system and that alternative methods of communication are not sufficiently clear. The school's policy is for homework to focus on learning rather than the production of written work. As teachers do not routinely check whether this learning has taken place, many pupils do not complete it as rigorously as they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The conduct of pupils within lessons and around the school is very positive. They continue to appreciate, and look after, their new school buildings, and the atmosphere around the site is almost universally calm and orderly. Incidents of minor poor behaviour are declining. Bullying is rare, pupils know what to do when it does occur and they feel confident that teachers will deal with it effectively if it is reported.

Leaders succinctly articulate the school's ethos through the acronym 'VALUED', which summarises the characteristics of the pupils they wish to create: versatile, aspirational, learned, understanding, engaged, determined. This is prominently displayed throughout the school and helps build the positive atmosphere.

Pupils are not yet, however, routinely demonstrating all these qualities in their own learning within the classroom. School leaders are highly aware that they need to develop further the range of skills in pupils which would allow them to take more responsibility for their own learning. Strategies introduced to promote these qualities include extending pupils' leadership opportunities, appointing pupil-US ('understanding students') mentors and instigating year parliaments. However, staff and pupils are clear that while the 'consequences' system for sanctioning poor behaviour works well in lessons, the rewards system for celebrating positive learning behaviour is much less effective.

Overall attendance remains broadly in line with the national average, which reflects much reduced absence compared with last year. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is still too high and, although declining, remains stubbornly above the national average.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels have ensured that the school has made reasonable progress towards addressing the priorities identified in the last inspection report. They have drawn up focused and achievable plans for addressing these key issues which have resulted in overall improvements in teaching, behaviour and outcomes for pupils. However, leaders have not ensured that they have monitored as robustly those areas of the school's practice which may not have been specifically

highlighted by Ofsted, for example the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

An external review of governance has been carried out since the last monitoring inspection. This evaluated the structures and procedures adopted by the recently appointed governing body. It praised the way that the new governors had set about their task and concluded that the governing body had been constituted in a sensible manner. Governors have found the review process to be helpful in clarifying their roles and responsibilities, and in identifying areas for future development.

Governors have now established a programme for the systematic adoption and review of statutory school policies. However, they have not acted with sufficient urgency to ensure that updated policies are available for parents through the school's website. They have also not ensured that other key areas of information for parents, such as information about the curriculum in each year group or the impact of catch-up funding for Year 7 pupils, are communicated through the website. Despite this, evidence from Parent View and the school's own surveys shows that parental confidence in the school is improving.

The quality of middle leadership, particularly among teachers in charge of subjects, is too variable. The strongest heads of department are driving forward improvements in their own areas and ensuring that standards within their departments are consistently effective. However, some heads of department are very new to their roles and they are in the process of developing their skills in monitoring achievement and the quality of teaching in their areas. Others are receiving additional support to improve their effectiveness. A number of middle leaders spoke of needing greater assistance in the analysis and evaluation of performance data. Some middle leaders are not clear about when they should be meeting with the senior leaders who are responsible for managing them.

External support

The Active Learning Trust has played an important role in supporting the improvement of the school. The school is part of a 'hub' of local trust schools, through which a programme of support is organised, including conferences and the sharing of effective practice, overseen by a trust hub leader. At the wider trust level there are regular meetings and training for senior leaders and governors, and the trust oversees procedures for the moderation of pupil assessments across secondary schools. The trust has brokered subject-specific support where necessary, for example for the mathematics department.