

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



Post-inspection note of visit letter – schools requiring improvement monitoring inspection visits

21 October 2015

Mrs Owen
Headteacher
Montacute School
3 Canford Heath Road
Poole
BH17 9NG

Dear Mrs Owen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Montacute School

Following my visit to your academy on 30 September 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 March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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 academy. The academy should take further action to:

- extend the academy's links with other local schools, and share best practice with those who are good or better
- ensure that leaders keep the 'old' website up to date with all required information, until the new one fully replaces it
- ensure that, by half term, the governing body can demonstrate how it is challenging and supporting staff to drive improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders and seven members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. You and I jointly visited five classes to observe how the academy now records information about students' achievements, and to see the impact on students' progress due to

the changes to teachers' planning. I evaluated the academy's improvement plans. I scrutinised a range of documentation including that related to safeguarding, evidence of the changes that have been made to the curriculum and the governing body minutes. I considered two letters from parents.

Context

Since the last inspection in March 2015, four new teachers have been employed, one of whom is a middle leader. New heads of lower, middle and upper school are in place. The academy has established a leadership team for planning, assessment, recording, reporting and celebration (PARCC). A review of governance has taken place and there are four new members of the governing body. Significant changes have been made to the curriculum, marking and assessment policies. The academy has been relocated to its new building.

Main findings

The quality of teaching and learning is improving. The PARCC team, the heads of school and other leaders have a clear, shared vision of what they want the academy to accomplish. Their determination, close teamwork and expertise can be seen in the improved curriculum and the sharper, more comprehensive assessment and recording of students' progress and development. Some of this work was trialled last term and other parts are at an early stage of development and implementation. However, improved progress for the most-able students has already been demonstrated over the last three weeks. Academy leaders agree that this level of progress and commitment by staff must be maintained.

Senior leaders are fully aware that much has been achieved, not least the successful move to the high-quality new building, but more remains to be done. They are aware that staff have not yet had enough coaching and training to ensure consistency. This has been planned. They are also, wisely, looking at ways of working more closely with other schools to share best practice and to ensure economies of scale, for example, keeping costs lower by having joint training activities.

Teaching staff and classroom assistants have higher expectations because they have better ways of measuring students' progress. They now have a clear recording and monitoring structure to follow. An external consultant has trained several leaders to undertake observations of learning in lessons and other activities. They are developing these skills well, so that they are better able to challenge and support colleagues to ensure that students make consistently good or better progress. From January 2016, they will help cascade these skills to heads of department so that they, too, can help in this process and be more firmly accountable for their areas of responsibility.

The academy's development plans concentrate on the appropriate areas for improvement. They build upon, and extend, those indicated in the last Ofsted inspection, when the academy was judged to require improvement. Academy leaders and governors are aware that the academy's development plans need to be refined in order for the academy to be judged 'good' in the shortest timescale. Some planned actions do not state clearly enough what a successful outcome will look like in relation to students' progress. This prevents the governing body and others from checking robustly, and easily, how well the students are achieving.

A new academy website is currently being developed and will be in place this autumn. Before the inspection the 'old' website contained some information that was out of date and lacked sufficient detail. This was because the academy leaders were concentrating on developing the replacement website. This has been rectified, for example statutory information is now provided about the use and impact of the pupil premium funding. This 'missing' information was available on-site in the academy, but parents and prospective parents now have access to it online.

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

External support

Shortly following the inspection in March 2015, the academy employed an educational consultant to work with the leadership team and heads of departments to review the feedback from the inspection and current practices. Academy leaders used this review to help them successfully form an action plan and improve the provision in the academy.

The review of the governing body highlighted strengths and areas for development. This inspection agrees with these findings. The governing body has planned an 'away day' in early October 2015 to finalise their structure and the proposed monitoring activities, and to further hone their action plan and auditing materials, so that they interlink directly to the other academy development plans. They are aware that an updated skills audit and further training, particularly of the new members, are required. These need to be completed before half-term so that the governing body can speedily demonstrate how it is challenging and supporting staff to drive academy improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Poole, the Regional Schools' Commissioner and The Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector