

Serco Inspections
Boundary House
2 Wythall Green Way
Middle Lane
BIRMINGHAM
West Midlands
B47 6LW

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



23 June 2010

Sir Mark Grundy
Executive Principal
Shireland Collegiate Academy
Waterloo Road
Smethwick
West Midlands
B66 4ND

Dear Sir Mark

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Shireland Collegiate Academy

Following my visit with Paul Edwards and Alan Lemon, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 June 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures in January 2010. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State and the chair of governors.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Special measures: monitoring of Shireland Collegiate Academy

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 21 and 22 June 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents, including safeguarding documentation, and met with the Executive Principal, the Associate Principal, the Principal of George Salter Collegiate Academy, nominated staff, groups of pupils, representatives from the Collegiate Academy Trust and local Governing Body. Observations were undertaken, some jointly with senior leaders, to 29 different lessons.

Context

Following the last inspection the academy challenged a number of the judgements. Subsequent delays meant that the inspection report was not published until the start of June, more than four months after the inspection, and the Collegiate Academy Trust's statement of action has therefore only recently been submitted to Ofsted. Since January the academy has created a number of additional senior management roles and made four new appointments.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Evidence gathered in the last inspection indicated that in a significant proportion of classes the students made inadequate or barely satisfactory progress. This situation has been reversed in less than six months. Students make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. Moreover, there are burgeoning elements of best practice where the quality of students' learning is consistently good. This transformation in the quality of learning has been achieved by the concerted focus on strengthening key elements of teaching, primarily lesson planning and behaviour management, underpinned by rigorous monitoring and the systematic use of assessment data. Nowhere is accelerated progress more evident than in Year 7, where the competency-based curriculum has had remarkable impact on the standard of students' work in English and mathematics, as well as their wider personal development.

Standards are rising across all year groups, including in the sixth form. The academy is on course this year, with a weaker cohort of students, to surpass the GCSE results achieved in 2009. If these results are realised, the academy will far exceed its targets and students will have made good progress from their starting points. The academy's rigorous tracking indicates that results at AS level and A level are also set to increase significantly.

Learning is well structured with clear objectives routinely shared with students so they know what they should achieve, and key elements of assessment highlighted so that students can evaluate their own performance and progress. Lesson planning



consistently good, but there is wide variability in the quality of learning. The most effective teachers present challenging work for all groups and model precisely what is expected and use resources cleverly to engage the students' interest and active involvement. The quality of learning tends to be uneven when learning outcomes are not carefully honed and the learning activities do not enable students to develop their wider understanding of topics covered.

The academy has in place an impressively rigorous system for monitoring the progress of individual students and groups, including students in the sixth form, and uses this information to guide suitable intervention and support where necessary.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the progress made by students in lessons, and their behaviour, by eradicating inadequate teaching and developing more good and outstanding teaching – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Since the last inspection, robust steps have been taken to improve students' attendance, their punctuality, behaviour and attitudes to learning. The academy's key performance indicators for each one show that it is moving strongly in the right direction and surpassing its targets. During the spring term there was a dramatic reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions, internal exclusions and lesson referrals when compared with the same period the previous year. This supports the academy's view that students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning have strengthened significantly since the last inspection. Although off-task behaviour is evident in a few lessons, it rarely disrupts learning. The students' attitudes to learning were at least satisfactory in all lessons observed and their behaviour was often good or outstanding. The students are polite and considerate towards one another and with visitors. The disruptive behaviour reported at the last inspection is not evident and the challenging behaviour of a very small minority of students is well managed.

As a result of the academy's initiatives to reduce levels of absence and persistent absence, attendance for the year as a whole has risen from 90.1% to 91.7%, which is broadly in line with the national figure. There has been a concomitant reduction in levels of persistent absence, which have been halved over the last year. The academy has rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and is alert to any variation between different groups of students.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve students' attendance rates and reduce the proportion who are persistently absent so that it is no greater than the national average, by robustly implementing nationally recognised strategies – good.



The effectiveness of provision

Good progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and eradicating inadequate provision. Although the pace and quality of learning varies widely, many lessons are sharply focused, well prepared and skilfully managed. Lessons are securely based on detailed planning and careful preparation. Good relationships between adults and students usually negate the need for overt behaviour management. Effective work has also been implemented in the use of data, target setting, the development of effective questioning and in sharing assessment criteria with students. Teachers are ambitious for their students, but the best lessons model precisely what is expected, including writing, so that students envisage what they might achieve. Furthermore, although there is some excellent marking, too much of the teachers' efforts are wasted either because it is unclear exactly what students need to do to improve their work or because the guidance is not followed through.

The academy has successfully established a positive climate for learning. Students arrive at lessons ready to learn, they follow instructions, sustain their concentration well and most participate willingly. Much of this improvement is based on better planning with a clearer focus on presenting suitable levels of challenge and, equally significantly, more careful consideration about how students will learn. Lessons have a good balance of teacher input, independent work based on well-devised pair and group activities and whole-class discussions.

Necessary steps have been taken to revise the curriculum offer for September 2010. A wider range of accredited courses is offered; including options that provide clearer vocational pathways for students between the ages of 14 and 18.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Develop the curriculum by providing more accredited vocational and work-related courses for students at Key Stage 4 – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Despite discontent about particular outcomes of the last inspection, the academy has taken a refreshingly positive approach to school improvement. Senior leaders have galvanised the efforts of the staff to strengthen key aspects of provision and have taken considerable strides to embed ambition and drive improvement successfully. There is no longer any complacency about the quality of teaching, morale is good and there is a remarkable determination to improve classroom practice. The academy has an accurate overview of the strengths in teaching and areas needing improvement, and has taken systematic steps to address weaknesses through effective support and rigorous monitoring. Strategic leadership of the sixth form is particularly strong and procedures for monitoring and strengthening sixth-form provision are robust and effective.

The academy's Raising Attainment Plan sets out key priorities and a suitable range of actions to guide its development. Although some elements of the plan lack



sufficient clarity, there is no uncertainty about procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions. Self-evaluation is regular, systematic and rigorous and keeps the local governing body and Collegiate Academy Trust well informed about progress and enables governors to hold the academy to account.

A key drive behind the academy's rapid improvement has been the involvement of middle leaders and the active engagement of staff. The Learning Gateway has proved an excellent tool for management and school improvement. The portal facilitates the sharing of resources and development of ideas, and enables middle leaders to monitor the quality of lesson planning and track student progress. The establishment of Change Teams, whereby staff can opt to have an input into one or more key priorities for improvement, has drawn on a wider range of expertise and opinion to better disseminate and embed improvements. Robust line management procedures have ensured that middle leaders understand their development role and monitoring responsibilities. Monitoring and evaluation in the sixth form is robust and rigorous.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that leaders at all levels, including in the sixth form, carry out improvements based on detailed and accurate evaluations of the areas for which they are responsible. Establish effective systems to check progress regularly against measurable milestones so that leaders and governors are aware of areas where improvement is insufficiently rapid – good.

External support

The proprietors have provided a suitable programme of support for the academy. The academy has drawn judiciously on guidance and support from a range of sources, including external consultancy, with much provided by Ormiston Education. The Trust's School Improvement Adviser is unequivocal about weaknesses that need addressing, the academy's priorities and the implementation of necessary support. His guidance has had considerable impact on strengthening provision and outcomes.

Priorities for further improvement

- Maximise the impact of marking by replicating the best practice, ensuring that all teachers understand how to provide high quality feedback and that the students respond to the guidance given.
- Focus on achieving a more consistent level of challenge for students in lessons by ensuring that the learning outcomes are suitably ambitious for each group, that teachers have clear strategies for assessing students' learning during the lesson and that they are aware of the importance of modelling outcomes to raise aspirations.

