

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

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



10 June 2014

Mr David Yates
Principal
Salford City Academy
Northfleet Road
Peel Green
Eccles
Manchester
M30 7PQ

Dear Mr Yates

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Salford City Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 9 June 2014, 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 academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in January 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection meetings were held with the Principal, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair and members of the School Improvement Board, and representatives of the sponsor, United Learning. A learning walk of the academy was conducted with senior leaders. The sponsor's statement of action and academy's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the academy's context since the section 5 inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The academy improvement plan prioritises the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The Principal and senior leaders convey a well focused and purposeful approach to improvement planning and implementation. They provide a clear direction for sustained and embedded improvement. Staff have confidence in the academy leadership. Effective monitoring and tracking of the academy's work have been further strengthened. Data collection and analysis of student progress are robust. Academy tracking and monitoring systems indicate that students are currently making better progress in English and mathematics. The academy has established a strong focus on how best to meet the learning needs of all students. Progress boards are used well to chart individual student improvement across the whole academy and within the English, mathematics and science departments. Systems are in place to ensure that pupil premium funding (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is well targeted and its impact is evaluated.

Programmes are now in place to share the best practice in teaching and learning more effectively. A strong emphasis has been placed on teachers improving marking practice and developing an active dialogue with students on the ways and means to improve their work. Students are provided with greater opportunities to develop extended writing during lessons. Regular audits of students' exercise books are undertaken by senior and middle leaders. Learning walks of the academy are also regularly undertaken by senior staff and teachers are provided with clear feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. A development programme is now in place to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of middle leaders. A parents' forum has been established to better involve parents in understanding the work, ethos and values that the academy seeks to promote. Currently, senior leaders are undertaking a review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum with the aim of enhancing and embedding student literacy, numeracy, oracy, and generic and subject specific learning skills. Senior leaders have established clear and specific actions to improve sixth-form provision.

The School Improvement Board forms a very strong group of many talents and significant experience in education. It offers robust challenge and very strong professional support to the academy leadership. The sponsor offers strong support. There is a very positive working relationship with the local authority. The academy has established positive local, regional and national best practice school links and such links are a developing strength of the academy.

I have recommended that the academy's improvement plan requires slight modification so that key milestones are established by which the impact of actions can be measured and checked against targets to ascertain ongoing progress. This would enable academy leaders to periodically reflect on, and evaluate, progress made and, where progress is not accelerating as expected, to take the necessary measures to ensure it does. I discussed at length how best to develop students'

formal speaking skills so as to enable them to talk more effectively, and with confidence, about their work and aspirations. I also discussed with the Principal the need to engage students more fully as participants in the development of an aspirational and improvement culture. Academy leadership have committed to reflect on these discussions.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The academy's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Academy School Improvement Board, the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty
Her Majesty's Inspector