

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 566863
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: jrbennett@cfbt.com

13 October 2014

Mr Des Bird
Headteacher
Richard Rose Morton Academy
Wigton Road
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA2 6LB

Dear Mr Bird

Special measures monitoring inspection of Richard Rose Morton Academy

Following my visit with Darren Stewart, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 9 and 10 October 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which 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:

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Academies Adviser Unit, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Acting Corporate Director of Children's Services for Cumbria.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching in order to ensure that all students, particularly of middle and higher ability achieve well, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - making sure that all teachers use the assessment information they have about the students to plan and deliver lessons that meet their needs
 - raising teachers' expectations of students' capabilities, ensuring that the work students are given to do is challenging, makes them think hard and, as a result, deepens their understanding
 - ensuring that students do not rely too heavily on their teachers and giving them more opportunities to find out things for themselves
 - ensuring that teachers regularly check students' understanding in lessons and adjust their teaching if students do not demonstrate a firm grasp of what is being taught
 - taking immediate steps to address gaps in students' knowledge and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics, in order to make up for weaknesses in teaching over time
 - ensuring that teachers consistently follow the academy's marking policy so that students are clear about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work and so learn from their mistakes.

- Improve students' behaviour, particularly in lessons, in order to maximise their achievement, by:
 - encouraging all students to take a positive approach to their learning and the opportunities provided by their teachers
 - increasing students' attendance and reducing persistent absence, particularly those students supported by the pupil premium or with special educational needs.

- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership team by:
 - strengthening their accountability for securing good or better teaching, particularly the role of middle leaders in carrying out their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that the procedures they adopt for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous, robust and have positive impact
 - using teachers' performance management effectively, to drive up standards in teaching and raise students' achievement.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 October 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, headteacher, groups of pupils, senior leaders and spoke to the Chair of the Improvement Board.

Context

There have been no major changes in context since the last monitoring inspection. The staffing changes highlighted in the last monitoring letter have been acted on.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Overall achievement at GCSE improved a little in 2014, but the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C including English and mathematics still remains below the government's floor standards. The headteacher expected higher outcomes, but the attainment and progress in mathematics were below the grades which were forecast by the academy. Results in English did improve in 2014 and the tracking data for current Year 11 show an improving trend. However, achievement across the academy is still not consistent with some subjects performing better than others and some year groups making better progress than others.

The forecast grades for GCSEs in 2014 in some subjects were not accurate and the academy is looking to improve in this area.

Achievement in year groups lower down the academy has improved, but the gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs compared with the achievement of other students need to narrow further.

The quality of teaching

The academy's latest monitoring records indicate that the quality of teaching is improving, which they argue is exemplified by students' improvement in rates of progress.

Inspectors' evidence indicates that there has been improvement, but there is a gap between the least and most effective teaching. There is also a gap between the level of the expectations of what students are capable of and the quality of marking and feedback. One of the challenges facing the academy is to have more consistency on the impact of teaching on students' learning. In some lessons students take ownership of their learning and are able to make accelerated progress. This was evident in Year 11 English lessons, Year 11 science lessons and a Year 10 computing lesson. However, in some other lessons, students were not making enough progress because their attitudes to learning were not as positive.

Literacy has been a focus and there is an effective programme in place. Marking for literacy can be seen in books and is having an impact, but it is not yet consistent across the academy because it is in its infancy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour continues to improve. However, there is still some low-level disruption in a few lessons which hinders the progress of some students. This is across a number of year groups. The academy has introduced a new behaviour management policy with clear expectations. It is too early to tell if there is any impact, but the academy is systematically evaluating what is making a difference to the way students behave.

There is a comprehensive programme to explore British values in their own context. The staff at the academy are aware of the nature and scope of extremism and some students are aware of the dangers of some fringe organisations.

Attendance continues to improve, but the persistent absence of a few students is not improving fast enough. Students arrive to the academy on time, are punctual to lessons and courteous to visitors. The environment in the academy is ordered, tidy and free from litter or graffiti.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

Leaders and managers continue to have ambition, but are realistic about the possible rate of progress with the turbulence over the last year. The leaders expected better GCSE exam results in 2014. This disappointment has made them focus even more on the rates of progress in Year 11 as well as embedding good practice lower down the academy.

The academy has a robust self-evaluation and development plan. It has a great amount of detail saying who is going to take action and who is going to check progress. Leaders have also introduced a robust departmental monitoring system to ensure more consistency.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is now more appropriate to the needs of the students. The academy has actively engaged with parents and conducts regular meetings with students who are not making the necessary progress.

The academy has undertaken an external review of the use of pupil premium (additional government funding). A notable outcome is that the academy is going to increase the expected progress of Key Stage 3 students. This should increase the aspirations of the students. The academy improvement board still holds the leaders to account and is clear about the need to improve rapidly.

External support

External support through the executive headteacher, consultants from the trust and other local subject leaders continues to be strong. There is also an appropriate

amount of challenge to the headteacher and the other leaders in the academy from the improvement board.