

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566863

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jrbennett@cfbt.com



30 January 2015

Mr Des Bird
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 Christine Kennedy, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 28 and 29 January 2015, 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 fourth 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.

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 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 a positive impact
 - using teachers' performance management effectively, to drive up standards in teaching and raise students' achievement.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 28 and 29 January 2015.

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

Since the last monitoring inspection, one teacher has left the academy and has been replaced. There have also been minor changes of responsibilities within the middle leadership.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

The academy's tracking data for current Year 11 indicate that the academy is on target to achieve much better results in 2015 than were achieved in 2014. However, there is variability between subjects. For example, due to historical curriculum decisions and a legacy of ineffective teaching, the proportion of students who achieve two good science grades are not expected to improve much in 2015.

Standards in lessons are variable, but the academy is intervening with certain groups to make sure that they reach their potential. The academy's data do not show any significant gaps in progress between different groups of students.

The proportion of students making expected progress in English is rising. A higher proportion of students are making more than expected progress in English. This is because of better day-to-day teaching, which helps the students to know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, in mathematics the proportion of students making expected progress is not increasing at the same rate. This is because day-to-day teaching in mathematics is weaker than that in English. Marking in mathematics is also poorer than that seen in English and does not always help the students to improve their work.

Progress at Key Stage 3 continues to be stronger than Key Stage 4 with the academy reporting some better levels of progress in all subject areas.

The quality of teaching

In the lessons where students make good or better progress students are enthused about their learning and settle down to work quickly. In these lessons teachers provide work which students find challenging, but is not too difficult. For example, in a physical education lesson in which the students made good progress, the teacher

skilfully involved the students to work with their peers. In this lesson very effective questioning led to the students improving their skills. However, the quality of teaching continues to be variable across the academy with a lack of consistency; especially in the marking of students' work across different subjects. Some lessons are well planned, delivered with pace and meet the needs of the learners, while others are not letting the students reach the higher levels.

Middle leaders are continuing to take responsibility for the development of teaching in their subject area, but again the impact of this is variable.

In some lessons students do not see a real purpose to the activities. As a result, they are not engaged in the lesson. Also, some activities are well within their capabilities, and again this leads to students being off-task. However, when planning is done in more detail and when the activities are varied and interesting, the students rise to the challenge and behave well and make progress.

Assessment information is clearly evident, but is not always used effectively in lessons to ensure all students make the necessary progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students report that the behaviour in the academy continues to improve and sanctions are in place when they misbehave. However, when teaching is not effective there is low-level disruption in lessons, which is stopping progress. The attendance of some groups of students needs to improve, for example the persistent absence levels of disadvantaged students is much higher than the national figure. This group of students will not be able to achieve their potential if they are not in school more often.

The academy is well kept, tidy, free from litter and is respected by the students. Behaviour at social times is generally calm and well ordered and the students spoken to report that they feel safe at the academy and know who to turn to if there are difficulties.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The academy has carried out reviews of the use of pupil premium money (additional government funding) and is acting on the recommendations. The impact of these changes has yet to be seen. There has also been a review of special educational needs within the academy to promote the progress of this group of students.

Planning for improvement continues to be a strength with effective self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring of the progress towards targets. The leaders at all levels are clear that the academy needs to improve the quality of the teaching further to make sure that the GCSE results improve in 2015.

Performance management is now embedded into the academy cycle and this is feeding through into the overall academy targets.

External support

The sponsor continues to provide support when necessary. This has been reduced over the last term as the academy has become more self-sufficient in promoting improvement. Local solutions are being used to improve teaching and governance, for example moderation meetings and super learning days.