

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

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

Direct T 0121 679 9167
Direct email: farhan.aslam@serco.com



24 April 2015

Stuart Tonks
Headteacher
Wilnecote High School
Tinkers Green Road
Wilnecote
Tamworth
B77 5LF

Dear Mr Tonks

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wilnecote High School

Following my visit with Colin Lower and Elaine Long, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 22–23 April 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 second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement 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 proprietor's integrated statement of action is fit for purpose.

I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint NQTs. The headteacher should contact the monitoring inspector to discuss any circumstances where the academy may appoint NQTs.

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 Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Gwendoline Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For academies [CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk]

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014

- Improve teaching to at least good, particularly in English and mathematics, so that achievement improves significantly by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and reducing the amount that requires improvement through rigorous and accurate monitoring and prompt action that is evaluated carefully for impact
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations and are supported to use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that build rapidly on students' achievements from their starting points and provide increased challenge, particularly for middle ability students and disadvantaged students
 - sharing more effectively existing good practice to improve teachers' questioning so that students are challenged to develop their oral responses, using subject-related language where appropriate
 - improve the quality of marking so that there are higher expectations of both the quality and quantity of work set and students know exactly what to do to make progress.

- Improve the management of behaviour so that it is good in all lessons and at all times of the day around the academy by:
 - ensuring that all teachers deal with low level disruption in lessons effectively and promptly
 - increasing supervision at break and lunch times, particularly in those areas where students are at some distance from academy buildings.

- As a matter of urgency, improve safety around the building by:
 - carrying out an audit of repairs and safe storage needed, acting rapidly on this information.

- Take rapid action to improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders rapidly and rigorously address weaknesses in teaching and learning, taking all appropriate evidence into account, so that judgements made are accurate and lead to effective action
 - ensuring that senior and middle leaders have a clear understanding of what constitutes good achievement and therefore an accurate view of the academy's performance in comparison to other schools nationally
 - improving leadership of English and mathematics, so that those responsible have a clearer view of what needs to be done to improve students' progress and take an active role in raising achievement in their subjects
 - evaluating the way in which pupil premium can be more effectively used so that it has a significantly greater impact on closing the gap between these students and

- others in the academy
- ensuring that the governing body more rigorously holds academy leaders to account for the quality of teaching and achievement.

An external review of governance and of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22–23 April 2015

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and groups of students, three lead members of the governing body and the regional director of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). Parts of 28 lessons were observed, some jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors visited a number of tutor periods and observed two assemblies. In addition, they observed students around the academy at the start of the day, during break and lunch times and at the end of the day.

Context

The academy received a Pre-Warning Notice letter from the West Midlands Regional Schools Commissioner in February 2015, following the Department for Education review visit in November 2014. The academy currently receives school to school support from the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). No significant changes to staffing have taken place.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The academy's own data indicate that more students are now making the progress they should, that students' achievement in mathematics is improving and that the performance of middle ability students is improving. Evidence from a number of lesson observations indicated that in some subjects, and with some teachers, students were making at least expected progress and some were making more than expected progress. However, this was not evident in most lessons observed. Despite some improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged students, gaps between them and other students in the school are still too wide. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to improve. However, the quality of students' written work and its presentation are too variable.

Students in the academy's Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Resource receive strong support that enables them to achieve well both academically and personally. This is also the case for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, who achieve academically at least as well as other students.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and its impact on learning overall is improving, although it is still too variable across subjects. Where learning is strong, lessons consist of well-structured, challenging activities so that students from all different starting points are appropriately stretched. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations about what students can achieve and how they should behave. However, where learning is

weaker, the most able students in particular are not challenged to move their learning on rapidly enough and, despite some improvement, too many students are not making the progress they are capable of.

The academy is beginning to improve the accuracy of staff assessments of students' attainment and progress by undertaking cross-checking, both within departments and with the help and support of external consultants. However, further work on this is still needed.

Marking has improved and most teachers now regularly provide students with feedback on what they have done well and what could be improved. There is some very good practice in this area. For example, in a Year 8 graphics lesson, students used the teacher's feedback comments to make significant improvements to their work. One student said, 'I really like this (the teacher's feedback) because it helps you tweak your work until its perfection.' Despite such examples of good practice, in general there was little evidence of students acting upon teachers' guidance about how to improve their work.

The quality of teachers' questioning is still too variable. Where learning is most effective, teachers ask questions well not only as a tool to check students' understanding, but also as a learning activity that helps students develop their oral skills and learn from the responses of other students in the class. However, in too many lessons, only students who wish to answer questions are required to do so and questions are not challenging enough. As a result, too many students are passively inattentive during lessons.

Too few teachers make effective use of data on students' prior performance when planning their lessons. As a result, in too many lessons, students with different abilities are expected to do exactly the same work in exactly the same timescale.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Attendance and behaviour are slowly improving as a result of changes to monitoring systems and school policies. The new behaviour system includes clear consequences for poor behaviour but is not clear about the rewards for good behaviour. This point was raised by a number of students.

While many students have good attitudes to learning and work well unsupervised, too many are passive and compliant in lessons and lack self-discipline when asked to work independently.

Changes to the structure of the lunch break and the amount of supervision at this time have produced a calmer atmosphere around the academy and students comment positively on this.

All safety hazards have been addressed following an independent health and safety inspection of the academy site. A new site team is now ensuring a more proactive system for identifying, reporting and dealing with hazards and safety issues. Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements and students understand how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders now monitor teaching more regularly. However, it is not yet clear if judgements about the quality of teaching over time regularly take into account the progress students are making, including that evident in their work. Better training is helping to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Focused 'learning walks' aim to evaluate the impact of this; for example, in relation to questioning and marking. This is allowing leaders to analyse more clearly key strengths and weaknesses. However, data about the outcomes of learning walks suggest that judgements are sometimes rather generous and leaders are reviewing their approaches in this respect.

More effective systems to check and track students' progress are providing leaders with better information about underachievement and where support is needed. However, these systems are still developing and need further refining. More focus needs to be given to the tracking of progress in Key Stage 3 to ensure consistency and rigour across subjects.

While whole-academy achievement targets have been revised, the academy now needs to review its approach to setting students' individual targets to ensure they are both motivating and achievable.

The academy produces extensive data in relation to attendance, behaviour, exclusions and serious incidents. However, this information is not used in an analytical way to provide good indicators about where further action and development are needed, or to allow leaders to take sufficiently prompt action to bring about improvement in these areas.

The academy's improvement plan has been regularly updated since the last monitoring visit. The plan is comprehensive and focuses clearly on the areas for improvement noted in the last inspection report. Whole-school academy targets are now more realistic while still being challenging. Structured, ongoing self-evaluation at subject and whole-academy level is now a priority. There is still an issue about the extent and quality of external evaluation of the academy's performance, although this is expected to be resolved through the support and challenge being provided by AET.

Leaders are providing support for the development of students' literacy skills. The impact of this on students' achievement and skills has not been clearly evaluated.

An external review of governance has taken place and the improvements to governance, noted in the last monitoring letter, continue to develop. The new lead governors have demonstrated a clear understanding of the academy's priorities and the challenge they provide to school leaders. However, this is not yet a common strength across the governing body. The use of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has been reviewed so that it more effectively supports eligible students.

The academy appointed an external consultant to undertake a review of leadership and management. The report on this has only just been received by the academy and hence it has not yet had any impact.

External support

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the proprietor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the integrated statement of action and improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The academy has a number of links with external consultants and other schools that are, for example, helping it in its work to improve the progress students make in English and mathematics. However, leaders have recognised that these arrangements are not providing sufficient support or challenge. As a result, the academy is currently receiving additional support from AET.