

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

26 June 2014

Mr Clive Pemberton  
Headteacher  
Wyedean School and 6th Form Centre  
Beachley Road  
Sedbury  
Chepstow  
NP16 7AA

Dear Mr Pemberton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Wyedean School and 6th Form Centre**

Following my visit with Cliff Mainey and Peter Clifton, additional inspectors, to your school on 24 and 25 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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 school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and the 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, the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire, the Education Funding Agency and the Academies Advisors Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely  
Simon Rowe

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013**

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in all subjects to ensure that all groups of students make at least good progress between the ages of 11 and 16, by making sure that:
  - teachers always expect the very best from all students
  - the tasks teachers set in lessons are at the right level to get the best out of all students, especially the most able
  - questioning builds on students' responses so that it probes and extends thinking
  - feedback to students in teachers' marking ensures that they know how to improve their work and that students act upon the teachers' suggestions
  - all lessons motivate and enthuse students and encourage high levels of attentiveness.
  
- Raise achievement, especially in English, and narrow the gap in achievement between those supported from the pupil premium and other students, by:
  - rigorously checking students' performance to identify underachievement at an early stage
  - rapidly giving support to those students who are in danger of underachieving
  - improving the support provided to disabled students and those who have special educational needs, both in class and when students are withdrawn for extra help.
  
- Strengthen the way in which all leaders ensure consistently good achievement, including in the sixth form, by:
  - developing a clear and simple system for tracking students' progress that is understood by all staff and enables leaders and governors to easily check the progress of different groups of students
  - checking relentlessly that teaching is good enough to lead to good progress and accurately identifying where improvements are needed
  - sharing good practice so that students do as well in all subjects as they do in the best
  - making sure that subject leaders take more direct responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and in holding teams to account for the progress of the students in their subjects.
  
- Ensure that governors are more active in monitoring the school and checking that agreed actions are effective in improving the quality of teaching and closing the gaps in achievement.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 June 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, groups of students and members of the governing body. The main focus for this inspection was to determine the progress the school has made towards improving the quality of teaching. Inspectors observed 38 episodes of teaching. The vast majority of these observations were conducted jointly with the senior leaders.

### **Context**

You have appointed two assistant headteachers who will commence working at the school in September 2014. The main roles and responsibilities for these new senior leaders will be to develop further the quality of information available with regards to students' achievement and the monitoring of their progress. They are also tasked with reviewing the range of subjects and support provided to students and evaluating the quality of the sixth-form provision. A permanent learning area leader for English has also been appointed as well as deputy learning area leaders for English and mathematics.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

You have developed a robust and rigorous system for collecting information on students' achievement. Teachers are required to provide information on the students they teach up to six times each year. This information is utilised well to provide an in-depth analysis of students' achievement and, in particular, of groups of students. Teachers, learning areas leaders and senior leaders are using this information effectively to provide targeted support for those students identified as needing to increase their rate of learning.

Current students who are about to complete Year 11 joined the school with levels of attainment that were broadly average. From the information you provided on students' expected achievement, this cohort is likely to leave the school with levels of attainment in line with the national average. This represents improved outcomes compared to 2012 when Year 11 students left the school having made inadequate progress.

The proportions of students expected to make good progress in English and mathematics are set to rise and to be in line with national comparisons. It is very encouraging to see an increase in the number of students expected to achieve the higher grades of A\* and A.

Evidence arising from a scrutiny of students' work across all year groups confirms that the rate of progress being achieved is variable. In some subjects, students' work is well presented, suitably challenging and students are, rightly, proud of their

achievements. In particular, students are progressing well in English, art and across a range of subjects in the sixth form.

In some subjects, however, there is very little evidence of work in books. It is poorly presented and much is incorrect and not completed. Where this is the case, students are unable to articulate what they have learnt and evidence of progress is limited.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection in October 2013. There is some teaching that is good and better. There is also, though, much that needs to improve further.

In the most successful teaching, teachers quickly establish a high-quality learning environment with clear expectations on the standard of work students produce, the presentation of work and on their behaviour. Students are confident to offer their thoughts and opinions during discussions; they work well on their own, in pairs and in larger groups.

Teachers develop strong professional relationships with students. Students follow their teachers' instructions quickly and the transition between different activities is swift, maximising learning time. Teachers' strong subject knowledge enables them to use highly effective questioning techniques to assess students' understanding of key concepts and to deepen their learning.

Feedback to students, in particular through marking, is highly effective in ensuring students know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. For example, in an art class, the in-depth and detailed feedback provided by the teacher gave students a clear indication of how to achieve the next grade. Students can articulate how this feedback is helping them achieve higher grades and, as a result, many are making outstanding progress.

Too much teaching, however, requires improvement. In these situations, teachers are not using the assessment information they hold on students' achievement to plan learning activities to sufficiently challenge them. Often, there is one activity for all students to complete. When this happens, less-able students do not receive the necessary support they require to be successful and the most-able students complete the work quickly as there is insufficient challenge. As a result, students do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Presentation in some students' books is poor and teachers do not challenge this. Teachers' questions do not require students to think deeply about what they are learning and many students opt not to respond. Learning support assistants are unsure of what is expected of them and, at times, wait to be given instructions. During discussions with students, they indicated that the quality of feedback they received was variable and depended on the teacher; inspectors agree with this judgement.

Feedback to students, particularly through marking, is simplistic and is often seen as simply a tick or through the words 'good' and 'well done'. Students are unsure of what they have done well, why some work may be incorrect and what they need to do to improve further. As a result, students are not able to articulate how they can improve their work and thereby make faster progress.

During my next visit, I will focus on the quality of feedback to students to assess whether it has improved across the school.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students are typically polite, courteous and respectful around the school site. Their behaviour leads to a calm and safe atmosphere.

Students' attitudes to learning are linked to the quality of teaching they receive. When teaching is at its best, students fully engage with their teachers and each other. They show a real enjoyment of their learning and try to achieve their best. They are resilient and determined to succeed.

When teachers do not sufficiently challenge students, they become passive and compliant. They do not actively engage with their learning and, often, they appear bored and uninspired.

During discussions with students, they indicated that bullying at the school was rare. If it did happen, however, they are confident the school would deal with any issues quickly and effectively. Students have a well-developed understanding of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. A range of activities has been implemented to deepen students' understanding of homophobic bullying. Students' depth of understanding of the issues associated with this are very impressive.

Attendance levels are broadly average and the proportion of students who are persistently absent from school is reducing. Exclusion levels are currently similar to those in 2013 and remain below the national average.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

You and your senior leadership team have continued to communicate raised expectations and to lead improvements at the school. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement are improving.

Improving the quality of teaching is, rightly, the main focus of improvement at the school. A variety of training opportunities have been provided for staff including increasing student participation through high expectations, active engagement, smarter marking and overcoming barriers to learning. Where necessary, teachers receive individualised support to accelerate their rate of improvement. The school utilises strong support from external consultants and local schools to ensure the needs of teachers are met. Virtually all inadequate teaching has now been eradicated.

During joint observations of teaching between inspectors and senior leaders, inspectors found that senior leaders' understanding of what constitutes good teaching is accurate. Senior leaders are offering effective feedback to teachers to enable them to develop their practice further.

There is regular monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior leaders, learning area leaders and external consultants. Monitoring activities include formal observations of teaching, learning walks, scrutiny of students' work and listening to students' views. Inconsistency still exists in key aspects of teaching such as planning and marking. This is partly due to the follow up to monitoring activities not always fully holding teachers to account when aspects of their teaching are not at least at the required level.

The governing body has received effective training from an external consultant to raise its effectiveness. Governors have a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas in need of development in the school. The governing body minutes evidence their increased challenge to senior leaders to bring about rapid improvements.

### **External support**

A wide range of effective support is being provided to aid you in your improvement plans. Leaders at local schools are providing coaching and mentoring support for senior leaders which includes sharing their good practice. Two leaders from other schools have been working with you a day a week and have helped you to develop effective systems to monitor students' achievement.

External consultants have provided helpful support to improve the quality of teaching. They provide training for staff, including enabling teachers to observe good practice in other schools. They also conduct joint observations with senior leaders to validate the accuracy of their judgements on the quality of teaching. The governing body has received good support to improve its effectiveness in ensuring improvements are maintained through rigorous monitoring and timely challenge.