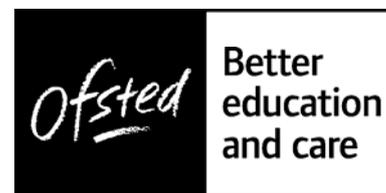


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19 July 2005

Mr B Davies
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Davies

Implementation of the Bridlington School Sports College's Action Plan

Following the visit of Cathy Kirby HMI, Marguerite McCloy HMI and Jane Austin HMI to your school on 6 and 7 July 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school's action plan is weak.

A revised action plan must be sent to the Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division, Ofsted, marked REVISED ACTION PLAN, within 25 working days of the monitoring inspection: 6 and 7 July. A copy of the revised action plan should also be sent to the Special Measures team in the School Improvement and Excellence Division at the DfES.

The LEA's statement of action was not due for completion until after this visit.

The school has made limited progress since being subject to special measures.

The LEA's target date of the autumn term 2006 for the removal of special measures is realistic.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Lifelong Learning for East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

IMPLEMENTATION OF BRIDLINGTON SCHOOL SPORTS COLLEGE'S ACTION PLAN

Findings of the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit 24 lessons or parts of lessons and three registration sessions were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, a group of middle managers, three groups of pupils, the chair of governors and representatives from the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and two representatives from the LEA.

The school's action plan is weak. There is a lack of coherence to the plan and the actions are not prioritised. It is heavily front-loaded with a large number of actions occurring simultaneously; a lack of clarity exists over the nature of and responsibility for monitoring procedures; many of the success criteria are too vague and very few are quantified in terms of a measurable outcome. In some cases, the success criteria and evaluation methods do not obviously link with the wording of the key issue. A distinction is not made between who will be monitoring the progress of actions and who will be evaluating their impact. There is no one person identified with overall responsibility for each key issue. The school is permitted to change the wording of the key issues following discussion with HMI.

The LEA provided HMI with a draft version of the statement of action to support the school's action plan; this visit occurred before their deadline completion date. The LEA may wish to redraft their statement so it is in line with the school's revised action plan.

At Key Stage 3, when compared with 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 or above in the 2004 tests fell considerably in English, from 66 to 56 per cent, and in science from 63 to 47 per cent. In mathematics, the proportions rose from 56 to 62 per cent. When compared with all maintained schools and with similar schools based on prior attainment, these results are in the lowest quarter.

The proportion of pupils who achieved five or more A* to C grades in the GCSE examinations in 2004 was 30 per cent, the same as in 2003. This places the school in the lowest quarter of similar schools and of all maintained schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved five A* to G grades rose slightly from 75 to 78 per cent, which is well below average. The trend in the school's average total

GCSE point score per pupil was below the national trend and the value added between Key Stage 2 and Key stage 4 is well below national expectations.

The average point score in the sixth form fell from 232 in 2003 to 218 in 2004; this was below national expectations. The percentage of entries gaining A to E grades also fell from 91 to 86 per cent. The total number of examination entries fell substantially in 2004, when compared to 2003, although enrolments had increased slightly during the same period.

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. In 20 of the lessons teaching was satisfactory or better; it was good in nine and very good in one. The remaining four lessons were unsatisfactory. The school has adopted a suitable lesson-planning format. However, it is not always used effectively to identify what the pupils will learn in a particular lesson; how the tasks will enable pupils of different abilities to achieve this outcome; the ways in which the pupils' skills in literacy or numeracy will be promoted; and how the pupils' progress will be assessed. Although some lesson plans identified key vocabulary, this was not usually shared with the pupils. Insufficient use is made of information about the pupils' prior attainment in planning their learning. In part, this is because marking is cursory, with only occasional indications to the pupils of the levels they are working at or what they need to do to improve. In some subjects, books have not been marked for a considerable period of time.

In the best lessons, learning objectives were explicit; the pupils were expected to apply themselves to work immediately and well-focused starter activities engaged their interest. A range of activities helped to motivate the pupils and sustain their interest and, where the opportunity for collaborative work was given, the pupils generally worked well together. The pupils were enthusiastic about practical, shared activities and expressed the view that these helped them to learn. Relationships were characterised by mutual respect and good humour.

A number of the satisfactory lessons shared some weak features with the unsatisfactory ones. In these lessons, starter activities were often too long; consequently, some of the pupils lost interest, began to talk and distracted others. On occasions, the teachers talked over this low-level noise, losing the attention of a significant proportion of the class. This was compounded by teaching and tasks which did not meet the learning needs of either the higher or lower attaining pupils. The teachers talked for too long, causing the pupils to be passive rather than actively engaged in their learning.

The school cannot be confident that citizenship is being taught across the curriculum; there is a lack of clear co-ordination and leadership, diminishing the pupils' entitlement. Work is underway to map cross-curricular information and communication technology (ICT) provision in order to ensure adequate coverage. A new locally agreed religious education syllabus is due to be implemented in the autumn term.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory overall. They were satisfactory or better in all lessons and good in ten of the 24 lessons. Behaviour around the school was satisfactory, although there were a few instances of jostling and boisterousness and some bad language. Staff supervision of pupils around the site was satisfactory.

The pupils' attitudes to learning were variable; this was most noticeable in the lessons where teaching was only satisfactory. Many pupils were compliant rather than well motivated and made insufficient progress. They responded more positively to lessons which engaged their interest from the start and when teachers set them challenging targets for their work and behaviour. In the better lessons, teachers used effective strategies to manage the behaviour of a few individuals, whilst allowing the flow of the lesson to remain uninterrupted. The pupils demonstrated sustained concentration, worked independently on tasks when required and asked pertinent questions in order to increase their understanding.

The pupils report that their views are listened to and each year group is represented at school council meetings. Many pupils spoke positively about improvements in the management of behaviour and punctuality. A minority of younger pupils expressed some concerns about feeling intimidated by older pupils around the school and its immediate vicinity.

The newly formed behaviour working group is a positive development. This group is leading a review of the school's current policy on behaviour and discipline. However, the timescales lack some urgency; a target of April 2006 has been set for the revised policy to be adopted, with a monitoring cycle beginning in September 2006.

Attendance is poor. At 88 per cent so far this school year, the attendance rate is well below the national figure for all schools and shows no improvement on the figures for 2003-4 year. Attendance for Year 7-10 pupils on the first day of this monitoring visit was only 87 per cent. Unauthorised absences have fallen during the same period, but, at 2.7 per cent, remain too high. Figures for permanent and fixed-term exclusions this school year are broadly similar to those for 2003-4.

The headteacher took up post in September 2004. He has rightly challenged persistent unsatisfactory teaching in a drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning and has appointed one additional teacher in each of the core subjects in order to reduce group sizes. However, the leadership and management of the school does not have a clear strategic direction. Since the inspection in February 2005, there has been a lack of urgency in moving the school forward; many of the actions identified as necessary to improve the overall quality of provision are not scheduled to start until September 2005. Within the senior leadership team there is a lack of clarity about who takes overall responsibility for the school's work in relation to each of the key issues. Responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of improvement strategies are unclear. Communication remains a major weakness, adding to the inconsistency of approach to whole-school improvement. Systems of accountability at all levels are underdeveloped; consequently, the school has an over-generous view of its progress. Minutes of meetings, record-keeping and the tracking of actions are poor and lack a systematic whole-school approach.

Middle managers have an emerging understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of their role; they have received some training to increase their effectiveness. There is considerable variability in the quality of management at both middle and senior levels, although overall there is the capacity to drive improvement.

A new chair of governors was elected in April 2005. He has made good use of the LEA's governor support programme, ensuring that governors' knowledge and understanding of policy and practice has developed rapidly. An appropriate range of sub-committees, each with clearly defined responsibilities, meet regularly. Minutes of the governors meetings do not routinely include action points and timescales.

The LEA's support for the school is satisfactory. A link advisor regularly visits the school and two other secondary advisors work with the school. The headteacher and staff report satisfaction with the quality of support they receive from the LEA. The LEA has a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Action taken to address the areas for improvement

1: raise standards of achievement by tackling root causes, rather than allocating blame

Data on the pupils' prior attainment has been collated; however, it is not used systematically across the school to inform lesson-planning to meet the needs of all the pupils. Numerous intervention strategies to raise standards of achievement

have been introduced, but analysis of their impact has not been undertaken. The school has identified the need to address the pupils' literacy and mathematical skills across the curriculum as a strategy to raise standards; however, little evidence of this was seen in lessons. Although a broad range of actions has been identified to address this issue, many of them have yet to be implemented and others are in the early stages.

Progress is limited.

2: improve teaching, ensuring that teachers' high expectations foster a culture of learning, success and celebration to inspire all pupils to want to come to school and do well

The new teaching and learning policy is clear and comprehensive, although guidance on the use of learning outcomes places too much emphasis on the completion of tasks and not enough on identifying what the pupils will learn during lessons. The minimum expectations for each lesson have been shared with staff, but since monitoring to ensure that these are being met has only recently begun, the school cannot evaluate the effectiveness of this work. Written feedback on lessons visited this half term is clear and includes helpful suggestions for improvement, although lessons are not graded. Procedures for regular and consistent monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning are not established at either whole-school or departmental level.

Progress is limited.

3: ensure that all required policies and procedures are in place and implemented consistently

The school has not agreed and implemented the systems required to raise standards and improve the quality of the education it provides. Although there are areas of good practice, this does not form part of a coherent set of policies and procedures which enable the school to fulfil its aims. Approaches are diverse, variable in quality and inconsistent in application.

Progress is limited.

4: ensure that managers keep track of performance rigorously, focus sharply on priorities and take speedy and effective action to deal with the weaknesses

There is a lack of rigour in monitoring standards of basic classroom practice and inconsistencies are apparent in the school's approach to tracking, monitoring and

evaluating actions already taken. Accountability at all levels of management is underdeveloped as are systems for recording the progress of actions and of assessing their impact. A number of managers at senior and middle levels are keen to take on responsibility and are committed to seeing the school improve.

Progress is limited.

5: manage pupils' behaviour positively and consistently so that standards rise and exclusions are significantly reduced

Strategies to improve the management of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school are beginning to have a positive impact on reducing the incidence of unacceptable behaviour. The creation of pastoral manager posts has added to the school's capacity to improve the management of the pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Progress is reasonable.

6: improve sixth form students attendance to school and punctuality to lessons

This area for improvement was not addressed on this monitoring inspection.

7: ensure pupils and students have their full entitlement in ICT, citizenship and religious education and have a daily act of collective worship

The school is reviewing aspects of curriculum provision in order to ensure that statutory requirements are met in ICT, citizenship and religious education. This work is in the early stages. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

Progress is limited.