

1 December 2005

Mr B Davies
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Davies

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BRIDLINGTON SCHOOL SPORTS COLLEGE

Introduction

Following my visit with Reg Chick, Betty Colley and June Tracey, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 29 and 30 November 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in February 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, members of the senior management team, other key staff, a group of teachers, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA). The evidence base for this visit was 33 lessons or parts of lessons, three registrations and one assembly.

Context

The school has specialist status as a sports college. In September 2005, eight newly qualified teachers joined the school. A deputy headteacher has been appointed and will join the school in January 2006. The school experiences a higher level of pupil mobility than is the case nationally.

Achievement and standards

Standards rose throughout the school in 2005 compared to 2004. At Key Stage 3 provisional results for the 2005 tests show that the proportion of pupils attaining the

expected Level 5 increased in all core subjects compared to 2004. In English the proportion rose from 56 to 61%; in mathematics from 62 to 68% and in science from 47 to 56%. Standards in mathematics are broadly average and remain below average in English and science. This represents good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English and science based on the pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2.

At Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils achieving 5 A* to C grades at GCSE rose from 30 to 37%. This represents a substantial improvement, although overall standards remain well below average. The gains pupils make at Key Stage 3 are not sustained in Key Stage 4; considerable variability in performance is evident between subjects. Pupils progress well in mathematics, physical education and design and technology, but pockets of underachievement remain in other areas. Boys underachieve compared to girls, considerably so, in some subjects. The school has identified this pattern in the examination results in its self evaluation although it is not specifically addressed in the action plan. In the sixth form the percentage of entries gaining A to E grades has risen from 86 to 97%; this is in line with the national average.

The overall improvement in standards is as a result of well targeted intervention to support pupils during the summer term prior to the 2005 examinations. However, the proportion of lessons in which pupils make good progress is too low to raise standards in all subjects rapidly.

Judgement

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- raise standards of achievement by tackling root causes, rather than allocating blame – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding in one lesson, good in 18, satisfactory in 9 and unsatisfactory in 5 of the 33 lessons observed. At the last monitoring inspection no lessons were reported as being inadequate in this respect. Inadequate behaviour and attitudes in class were often due to teaching that lacked challenge. On occasion students' attitudes were compliant but their 'hearts and minds' were not in the lesson. Pupils responded positively in lessons which engaged and sustained their interest, where they were set challenging tasks and where they were given some responsibility for their own learning. Around the school there were instances of over boisterousness, bad language and disrespectful behaviour from a minority of students. Recently revised behaviour management strategies have yet to impact positively on all pupils. Strategies are not applied consistently; too many teachers were prepared to talk over students. Monitoring the impact of the behaviour management strategies both in class and around the school lacks rigour.

Pupils have adequate opportunities to take responsibility for example in serving on the school council, being a school prefect and working on the school's anti-bullying

policy. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, but insufficient attention is given to the pupils' spiritual development.

At 89% attendance is unsatisfactory. There has been a one per cent improvement in attendance over the last academic year and likewise there has been a one per cent drop in unauthorised absences. During the inspection attendance in lessons both in the main school and the sixth form was 90%. Nevertheless the overall attendance rate falls below the national figure. Attendance in the sixth form has improved considerably since the last monitoring visit; new practices and procedures to monitor and follow up non-attendance have been used to good effect. In Year 13 attendance has risen from 68% in 2004 to 84% so far this year, although this figure is still too low. In Year 12 figures have improved over the same period from 81 to 92%; this represents good progress and satisfactory attendance.

The school has worked hard to reduce the number of fixed term exclusions in the main school. Although the number of days lost through exclusion has fallen from 162 during September and October 2004 to 99 for the same period in 2005; the figure remains too high.

Judgement

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- manage pupils' behaviour positively and consistently so that standards rise and exclusions are significantly reduced – inadequate progress
- improve sixth form students attendance to school and punctuality to lessons – good progress

Quality of provision

Teaching was satisfactory in 18 lessons and good in nine lessons. Teaching was inadequate in six lessons mainly because of the pupils' poor responses and attitudes to teaching which lacked challenge and did not engage or sustain their interest.

In the good lessons and some of the satisfactory lessons, objectives were shared so that pupils understood what they were doing and why. Teachers established good relationships and managed the pupils' behaviour well. The skilful use questioning enabled pupils to build on their previous learning and learn from their mistakes; activities were varied; pupils were encouraged to work collaboratively; teachers maintained a brisk pace; pupils were engaged and challenged and made at least satisfactory progress. There has been some improvement since the last monitoring visit in the way in which pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed through the wider curriculum, and in the teachers' use of interactive whiteboards to support whole-class activities. The use of praise and reward systems is developing well in some areas, but again the approach is not consistent across the school. A weaker aspect of pupils' learning, even in some satisfactory lessons, is the poor presentation of work, often because teachers do not give sufficient direction about the structure of written work and what is acceptable.

Since the last monitoring visit the school has introduced a whole school system of assessment to track pupils' progress and identify underachievement. Assessment information and target grades are shared with staff. However, the information is not used effectively to plan lessons which meet the needs of all the pupils, particularly the more able.

A high priority has been given to the development of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Well-targeted teaching of small groups in the summer term was effective in raising standards. The new Learning and Teaching group and peer mentoring have a focus on sharing good practice; a resident consultant provides good professional development for newly qualified teachers; cross curricular support from stronger teachers through the coaching system has led to improvements in the quality of schemes of work. Although much of this work is at an early stage, its impact in the classroom needs to be seen quickly if the proportion of lessons in which pupils make good progress is to increase. The quality of marking is variable. Some good practice was seen in technology subjects; pupils were appreciative of the clear feedback they receive and constructive advice on how they could make further improvements. In some subjects marking is often cursory and unhelpful.

Provision in the physical education curriculum area is sound and behaviour of the pupils is good. The area makes a positive contribution to school improvement through the formal sharing of best practice and coaching colleagues in other curriculum areas. Curriculum leaders in other area report that this work is valuable.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum has been broadened to better meet the needs of all the pupils by the inclusion of work related learning through collaborative arrangements with a local college. Systems for monitoring the pupils' progress on courses delivered off-site are underdeveloped. The school provides effective support in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties enabling them to make appropriate progress, although records of their progress are not kept systematically. Statutory requirements in information technology in Years 10 and 11 are still not met. The school has been frustrated by a number of constraints, including suitability of accommodation, in its attempts to increase the number of stations available to pupils. Pupils and students do not have a daily act of collective worship although different groups of pupils and students attend assemblies during the school week.

Judgement

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- 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 – satisfactory progress
- ensure pupils and students have their full entitlement in ICT, citizenship and religious education and have a daily act of collective worship – inadequate progress

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior and middle leaders have worked hard to bring about improvement in the school's provision with some success. Standards have risen at all key stages, there has been a significant improvement in sixth form attendance and a reduction in the previous high level of exclusion. Key information is communicated more effectively to all staff. A united front is emerging in the approach to school improvement because staff have a clearer understanding of the school's weaknesses and the work that needs to be done to address them. The school has made good use of links with a range of external partners to extend the choice for pupils at Key Stage 4 and provide enrichment opportunities. Additional funding has been secured through LIG and the Excellence cluster to provide well targeted support. Training for middle managers has had a positive impact as they begin to develop a greater understanding of their role. However, some school improvement work lacks clear strategic direction and a large number of initiatives are being implemented simultaneously. Systems for monitoring actions are not robust enough to enable senior leaders to accurately gauge their impact. Evaluation reports produced by senior managers are variable in quality. Where evaluation is sharp, it focuses clearly upon the impact of work done; in other cases evaluation comprises a list of actions completed rather than a considered view of their impact upon provision. Consequently the school has an overview-generous view of the quality of teaching and learning, the use made of assessment information in planning lessons to meet the needs of all the pupils and the quality of marking.

The new chair of governors has invigorated the governing body. He is effective in challenging as well as supporting the headteacher. Minutes of meetings show that governors are increasingly holding the school to account through asking appropriate questions and regular visits. The introduction of link governors to subject departments is well considered. Governors regularly review policies, although some of these are not implemented with the consistency required.

Judgement

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- ensure that all required policies and procedures are in place – satisfactory progress and implemented consistently – inadequate progress
- ensure that managers keep track of performance rigorously, focus sharply on priorities and take speedy and effective action to deal with the weaknesses – satisfactory progress

External support

The Local Authority's (LA) statement of action was not reported on following the first monitoring visit, as this occurred before the deadline set for completion of the document. The statement of action is satisfactory and contains an appropriate range of actions which have clear success criteria. The target date of October 2006 for the

removal of special measures is realistic. Considerable and well targeted support has been provided through a range of advisors and consultants. The impact of their work with middle managers and newly qualified teachers has been positive. The headteacher has been well supported in the redrafting of the school's action plan. Additional LA governors have strengthened the work of the governing body.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the school's strategic management of initiatives to raise its performance.
- Improve the way the school keeps a check on the progress and effectiveness of the initiatives it introduces.
- Improve the proportion of good or better teaching.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve their work.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Lifelong Learning for the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Kirby
H M Inspector