

Suite 22 West Lancs  
Investment Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

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

Direct T 01695 566930  
Direct F 01695 729320  
Direct e-mail [gtunncliffe@cfbt.com](mailto:gtunncliffe@cfbt.com)

14 June 2010

Dr Fiona Ireland  
Headteacher  
Withernsea High School Specialising in Humanities  
Hull Road  
Withernsea  
HU19 2EQ

Dear Dr Ireland

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when we inspected your school on 11 June 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please pass on special thanks to the students who met with my colleague, Lyn Fields, Additional Inspector.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and improve the achievement of students at Key Stage 3
- raise standards and improve the achievement of students in English and mathematics throughout the school, particularly for boys
- develop high quality teaching and learning throughout the school
- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management to enable greater consistency in the implementation of policies introduced
- ensure the courses students take in the sixth form match their capabilities as well as their interests.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Standards are rising in Key Stage 3 and an increasing number of students are reaching Levels 5 and 6 in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Improvements are also evident in other subjects. There was a very marked improvement in English in 2008/09 reflecting better teaching and more effective use of data to track students' progress. Standards at the end Key Stage 4 have risen, especially in English. There has been less improvement in mathematics but internal



data suggest that pass rates in GCSE mathematics will be higher this year and there was a marked improvement in grades obtained by students who sat the examination in November. Girls are still outperforming boys but the gap is closing. Boys' attainment on entry to the school is lower than the girls and data show that boys are making the progress expected of them in Key Stage 3.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection but much of the development has taken place in the current academic year. Lesson observations, carried out by the school and local authority consultants, show the proportion of good and better teaching has almost doubled this year. There is a much better understanding among staff of what constitutes good teaching and learning and teachers are taking an increasing pride in their work. Training and support for teachers are being tailored more closely to the needs of individuals, good practice is being shared more effectively and around 20 teachers are gaining new skills from the Teacher Effective Enhancement Programme run by a neighbouring local authority. Middle and senior leaders are aware of the remaining areas of weakness and they are being addressed.

At the time of the last inspection, many senior and middle managers were new in post and systems for making effective use of data were not embedded. Middle managers were at different stages in implementing and appreciating the benefits of the new systems. Bespoke training is now provided, the strong leadership in English and the humanities is used well to support other subjects and five middle leaders are benefiting from management training programmes. Consequently, middle leaders are more effective. Progress and support visits, involving local authority advisors, have been invaluable in helping both senior and middle leaders develop quality monitoring skills. Leaders now have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are tackling remaining inconsistencies effectively. The rate of improvement is accelerating.

The sixth form curriculum is meeting students' needs more effectively. Students receive individual advice and guidance prior to enrolment to ensure they are on a suitable programme of study. More Level 2 and vocational courses have been introduced to meet the needs and interests of students and practical qualifications in construction are being offered through links with a local training provider. The number of Year 11 leavers not progressing to education, employment or training has reduced considerably.

The humanities specialism is in its first year but already has a reputation for exceeding attainment targets and attracting increasing numbers of students. Humanities teachers have played a key part in improving teaching and learning and middle leaders in humanities are giving effective individual support to managers in other areas.

The school has received good support from the local authority via the progress and support visits. Other valuable support has come from the local learning partnership and the school's Gaining Ground Partnership with Minsthorpe High School.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett  
Her Majesty's Inspector