

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

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320
e-mail gtunncliffe@cfbt.com

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Ms Sarah Pashley
Bridlington School Sports College
Bessingby Road
Bridlington
YO16 4QU

Dear Ms Pashley

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 April 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to give special thanks to staff and students who attended meetings with us.

The headteacher joined the school in September 2009, the third headteacher since 2006, and two key members of the senior leadership team were absent for most of the last academic year. The senior team has now stabilised and is strengthened by a deputy headteacher on loan from a neighbouring school. Past staffing issues in English and science have been addressed.

As a result of the last inspection on 25 and 26 June 2008 the school was asked to:

- improve literacy across the school
- improve the academic guidance offered to students
- develop the wide range of strategies already in place to improve attendance and raise awareness of the value of education among students and parents.

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.

The proportion of students leaving school with five GCSE passes has risen to around average and the proportion of students achieving five high grades at GCSE has increased steadily but is still low. Fewer students achieved a high grade GCSE pass in English last year. Internal tracking data, which have proved accurate in the past,

September 2009



indicate a marked improvement in attainment this year and modular GCSE results support this. Curriculum changes, better monitoring of students' progress and more effective interventions are contributing to the improvements. Students made good progress in the majority of lessons observed and tracking data show students' progress is improving across the school.

Small improvements were made in developing literacy across the curriculum last year but progress is accelerating. The newly appointed literacy co-ordinator works with senior leaders and local authority advisers to ensure that teachers understand students' individual literacy needs and how to address them. Teachers can see the benefits of adapting their practice to make lessons accessible to students with weak literacy skills. More extensive and effective intervention programmes are improving students' progress and motivation.

The school has implemented a coherent strategy to improve the effectiveness of assessment. Local authority advisers worked closely with teachers in the autumn to ensure that assessment is accurate in all subjects. The robust lesson observation system is focused on improving assessment and a well-planned programme of staff training is spreading best practice. There is still variation in the quality of marking, however.

Attendance has improved considerably this year. Parents are informed quickly about any absence and staff work more closely with parents of persistent absentees. The proportion of persistent absentees has been reduced to 10.8% which is 3.4% lower than last year. The attendance tracking and rewards system, launched in February, is having a very positive impact. Attendance during February and March was 2% higher than in the same period last year. These improvements have been achieved despite the mid-year admission of a high number of students with poor attendance records.

The specialism has a strong positive impact. Specialist teams led the development of vocational programmes and are spreading best practice in the use of assessment to enhance learning. Specialist staff also play an active role in supporting inclusion in the town. Attainment in the specialist subjects exceeded predictions in 2009.

Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and are driving improvements at a lively pace this year. Their clear vision for the school is communicated well and they have gained the confidence of students and staff. The school improvement plan is concise, prioritised well and on schedule. Many improvements have been introduced since September and some are already effective but it is too soon to see their full impact.

The school has received excellent support from local authority advisers and closer collaboration with other schools in the town provides increasing support. The youth service and other social/community services provide very good support in tackling inclusion issues.

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