

Serco Inspections
Boundary House
2 Wythall Green Way
Middle Lane
BIRMINGHAM
West Midlands
B47 6LW

OFSTED

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

SERCO

Direct T 0121 683 2888

Direct email barnaby.pain@serco.com



11 November 2010

Mr Kennedy
The Lancaster School
Knighton Lane East
Leicester
LE2 6FU

Dear Mr Kennedy

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Lancaster School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school together with Christine Mayle, additional inspector, on 10 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the Chair of the Governing Body and the group of pupils that we met.

Since the previous inspection in June 2009, there have been two significant changes in middle and senior leadership. In June 2009, a new head of mathematics joined the school, and in September 2010 the senior leadership team was remodelled with the appointments of two new deputy headteachers and two additional assistant headteachers to further increase capacity.

As a result of the inspection on 18 June 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The GCSE results of 2009 remained below average, and measures of progress were broadly in line with expectations for all subjects but were low in English and mathematics. However, in 2010, provisional results at GCSE were the best in the school's history, with 66% of pupils gaining five or more good grades at GCSE. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more good grade GCSE's including English and mathematics remained static at 41%. While overall standards were just below national averages, progress was broadly in line with expectations. Pupils in the current Year 11 are on target for even higher results in 2011 and our



observations confirmed the school's view that standards and the progress that pupils make has improved further. These improvements are the result of recent developments in the quality of teaching and learning and the targeted support for individual pupils who look to be underachieving. The school now systematically tracks pupils' progress, informs pupils, and their parents and carers, regularly about how things are going, and ensures that teachers are able to correct any shortcomings in good time.

The headteacher provides very clear direction for improvement and has been working hard with the senior leadership team, middle leaders and managers to change the ethos throughout the school and to focus more sharply on improving achievement and the quality of provision at every level. Their drive and determination to put pupils' achievement at the heart of the school's work has resulted in the improved teaching and learning. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation and well-focused training and coaching of the middle leaders have resulted in an increased level of accountability that has raised teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve. There are now high expectations about achievement and behaviour.

During our visit, we observed 10 lessons; all were at least satisfactory with the majority being good or outstanding. Action has been taken to strengthen aspects of teaching such as the consistency of the planning. This now focuses the teacher on the needs of all learning groups in the class, and on the emphasis of behaviour that supports learning. The imaginative use of resources is well matched to the needs of boys specifically, for example, sports references, competition and subject matter that fire their imagination. In order to improve further, the school is focusing on providing more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning. Currently, in some lessons, teachers dominate discussions and there is insufficient paired and group work. The good teaching is reflected in the pupils' improved attitudes to their learning, such that their behaviour in and around school has improved considerably and is now good. This demonstrates that the behaviour for learning policy is working and is having a positive impact.

Marking quality varies between classes. The best examples demonstrate an accurate diagnosis of working level, clear feedback on what is needed to improve, and an expectation that pupils will respond to that advice. In a minority of classes, marking is limited to perfunctory ticks coupled with general encouragement and advice. Most pupils know their target grades and know what they need to do to achieve them. These details are clearly written in reports to parents and carers.

The extended senior leadership team has brought consistency of practice, robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching, in building a stronger capacity to improve. As one pupil put it, 'Everyone works together as a team to make sure that you learn'. The sport and art specialism contributes well to school improvement, for example in its work with the English and modern foreign languages departments to improve

pupils' engagement in their lessons. Progress towards developing a better provision for community cohesion has been good. A policy is now in place with a well-structured action plan which is monitored regularly by the coordinator and a link governor. The school works across departments to provide theme days on topics such as global warming which has developed pupils' understanding of their place in the world.

The local authority has provided helpful support for the school and the School Improvement Partner has made a valuable contribution to the recent improvement.

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

Yours sincerely,

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2009.

- Ensure that the whole-school behaviour for learning policy is implemented consistently well through regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve standards and achievement across the school, especially in mathematics, through consistent use of assessment information to plan tasks that provide a better match to pupils' learning needs.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning through greater pace and challenge, better use of assessment in lessons to check learning, and regular feedback to pupils on the quality of their work and how to improve.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels contribute effectively to quality assurance activities, check progress regularly, and use the outcomes for improvement.
- Ensure that work to promote community cohesion and equalities is effectively coordinated, and evaluated regularly to support improvement.