

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



11 November 2010

Mrs Harris
Acting Headteacher
Frankley Community High School
New Street
Frankley
Birmingham
B45 0EU

Dear Mrs Harris

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Frankley Community High School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school 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 pass on my thanks to the students who met me at lunchtime.

Since May 2010, the school has been led by a deputy headteacher from Colmers School, an outstanding local school. Partnership arrangements have enabled another deputy to work at the school full time. Various options for the school are being considered in a feasibility study commissioned by the local authority.

As a result of the inspection on 24 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 outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Steady improvement in attainment since 2007 gained significant momentum during 2009/10. Key Stage 4 results were strikingly better, with the proportion of students who gained five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics up to 41% from 21% in 2009. The school's well-founded predictions for the current year indicate that attainment is continuing to improve sharply. A policy of entering students early for examinations has already secured pass rates of around 30% at grade C in English and mathematics. Standards of coursework indicate that many more students are likely to reach this level by the end of the year. As attainment on entry to the school is below or well below average, these results are strong evidence of increasing numbers of students making good or better progress. Value-added

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analyses are very positive and many groups significantly exceed expectations. The high number of students known to be eligible for free school meals do particularly well in comparison with similar students nationally.

The quality of teaching and learning was good or better in nearly all of the lessons seen, confirming the school's and local authority's view that it has improved considerably. The teachers plan lessons with greater attention to the needs of specific groups, and use changes of pace and varied teaching methods well. Students' ready recall of knowledge from previous lessons was often a notable feature, and they appreciate the focused feedback they usually receive. The leadership team, however, acknowledges that there is still some inconsistency, for example in the regularity and precision with which books are marked.

The senior leadership team has instilled a belief in all members of staff that the school can do better. Clearer expectations for staff and students have fostered an acceptance of greater accountability and both speak favourably of the school's better ethos and greater effectiveness. Students have begun to see that academic success is possible and worthwhile; middle leaders and teachers have realised the value of using assessment data consistently.

A new post of academic manager has provided greater coherence between pastoral and subject-driven efforts to motivate students. A wide range of strategies to target and support all groups has been highly beneficial in raising aspirations and outcomes. Similarly, a senior leader has co-ordinated the school's strenuous efforts to tackle poor attendance. Students are in no doubt about the importance the school attaches to this aspect. Imaginative rewards, consistently implemented sanctions and constant highlighting of the value of attending regularly have driven absence down. There is still some way to go to capture the support of all families but attendance since the beginning of term is around 92%. Persistent absence is still too high but has dropped to nearly half of what it was two years ago.

This impressive track record of improvement stems from a willingness to evaluate with great rigour and honesty, and to tackle diligently any barriers which are identified. The much greater capacity for sustained improvement is also underpinned by middle leaders applying a rigorous approach to analysing the effectiveness of their own departments.

The partnership with Colmers School has been highly influential and the local authority has played its role well in identifying and supporting necessary actions.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Hubbleday".

Rob Hubbleday
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise the proportion of good or better teaching by engaging pupils more in their own learning and ensuring that marking consistently informs pupils how to improve their work.
- Ensure that systems for monitoring and evaluation, including of attendance, are implemented rigorously and consistently across the school.