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5 Apr 2011

Mr C Catherall / Mr P Scarborough
Headteacher
Worden Sports College
Westfield Drive
Leyland
Lancashire
PR25 1QX

Dear Mr C Catherall / Mr P Scarborough,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Worden Sports College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 Apr 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the students and members of the governing body for all of their valuable contributions.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing, most notably in the senior leadership. After a prolonged period of absence, the headteacher left last summer and the two deputies became acting headteachers. An associate headteacher was brought in from another secondary school to support the new leadership for three days a week. Whilst this initial support was highly valued by senior leaders, the governors and school assessed that it need only be temporary to help the transition of new leadership.

As a result of the inspection on 20 January 2010, 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection, attainment at Key Stage 4 has risen. Results for five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics have improved by three percentage points from 2009 to 2010. For five A* to C grades at GCSE there has been a 19 percentage point increase over the same period. The school's robust monitoring systems show that Year 11 students are on track for further improvements in 2011, particularly in English and mathematics. Results of early entry for mathematics and English are very positive. Current tracking shows that results for this year will likely be well ahead of last year. Students have a better understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve. Students with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than the majority of their peers as do students who are eligible for free school meals.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

During this inspection no inadequate teaching was observed. In the best lessons, expectations are high and students make good progress because of effective teaching with plenty of challenge, independent learning and a brisk pace. In some lessons, however, students were passive, the pace was slow and the majority of the learning led by the teacher.

Teachers and heads of department are now more accountable and have responded with enthusiasm and commitment to the changed culture of higher expectations and teamwork. Leaders are aware that further improvement in assessment, challenge and pace is required in a variety of subjects. The curriculum has been strengthened with additional vocational courses and a greater focus on potentially high achievers. The specialism contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning. All specialist school targets were met last year.

Inspired leadership and effective strategic management from the acting headteachers have engendered a dramatic change of culture in a very short space of time. The vision set by the new leaders, heavily influenced by success in the sports specialism, is to 'raise the bar' and 'achieve new heights'. It is clear from the atmosphere within the school and from talking to students and staff that they are incredibly motivated to work as a team to improve outcomes.

The head of specialism is now leading on teaching and learning and has introduced new ways of working including coaching triads for staff to critically evaluate each others' work and share good practice. The specialism features in every section of school improvement planning and, although there are clearly improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, there is still scope for good practice to be targeted more specifically at some departments.

Challenging targets are set at both key stages, monitoring and intervention strategies have been tightened and are more focussed. Data and information are effectively shared, analysed and used by staff to promote improvement. The school recognises that there were some inconsistencies in tracking data last year and has taken effective steps to remedy this. Members of the governing body have been pivotal in steering the school through some very turbulent times. Their commitment to raising standards is indicative of the drive shared by leaders at all levels. The School Improvement Partner is working closely with the school to assist them in their continued focus to improve outcomes.

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

Mrs Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place

- Increase the number of students attaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching
 - setting challenging targets for all students, particularly from Key Stage 2 to 3 and from Key Stage 2 to 4 in English, mathematics and science
 - making better use of assessment data to raise staff expectations
 - matching work more accurately to students' abilities.
- Improve the rigour of school self-evaluation, by:
 - checking thoroughly that agreed actions are fully implemented
 - evaluating the impact of agreed actions against the outcomes achieved by students
 - linking students individual subject targets to whole school targets more accurately
 - strengthening the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning
 - holding staff accountable for the outcomes achieved by students.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - increasing the accountability of leaders and managers at all levels for the outcomes achieved by students
 - sharing the good practice which exists in the specialist faculties across all departments
 - evaluating the impact of leaders and managers at all levels against improvement in students' outcomes.