

Serco Inspections
Cedar House
21 William Street
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1LH

Ofsted
T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Serco
Direct T 0121 683 3888



6 July 2011

Mr C Nutting
Headteacher
Ridgewood High School
Park Road West
Wollaston
Stourbridge
DY8 3NQ

Dear Mr Nutting

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Ridgewood High School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 July 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

There have been no significant changes to the context or staffing of the school since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 10 and 11 May 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the inspection in May 2010, the quality of teaching in the school has improved significantly. Senior school leaders have established effective programmes both to monitor the quality of teaching and to enable teachers to work together to improve the key aspects of teaching highlighted in the inspection report. Standards are rising in the school as a result and students are now making much better progress.

In an outstanding religious education lesson with Year 7, students responded with enthusiasm to a very imaginative activity based on an incident in the life of St Peter, in the scenario of a criminal investigation and court case. The teacher's questioning was skilful and led to students making perceptive responses which illustrated their good progress. In an outstanding Year 10 drama lesson, students worked well

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together on a dramatic interpretation of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. The teacher's interventions were again skilful and well-judged, so that students were able to improve their work and make very good progress without the flow of their work being interrupted. The benefits that these students are gaining go beyond the confines of the particular subject and contribute to their overall confidence and ability to express themselves.

The progress that students make is now monitored with rigour. Parents receive a mid-year report on the progress of their children. Where students are not making sufficient progress senior leaders ensure that closer monitoring and support are put in place. The curriculum has also improved so that it now meets the interests and needs of students in Years 9, 10 and 11 much better and is already contributing to higher standards.

Senior school leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and also its development needs. They turn this evaluation into high quality improvement plans which are accompanied by a useful summary to convey the priorities for improvement to a wide audience. Together with the good progress made since the May 2010 inspection this illustrates the good progress made in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has specialist status in science. Attainment in science is now improving rapidly. The specialist status is also being used well to enhance standards and provision across the school, including a whole school enrichment day each year devoted to STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

The school has been usefully supported by other schools nearby, including partners in the Stourbridge Educational Trust. In turn, it has provided reciprocal support for other schools.

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

Robert Barbour
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Accelerate the rate of pupil progress by ensuring that, by December 2010, at least 60% of teaching is good or better and 10% outstanding through:
 - embedding and sharing existing good practice
 - ensuring that assessment data is used to plan fast paced lessons that are well matched to students' different abilities
 - providing learning activities that motivate, challenge and actively engage students
 - improving questioning techniques so that teachers can assess accurately students' learning and adjust lessons accordingly
 - ensure that students know how well they are doing, and how to improve, through regular high quality marking and feedback.
- Increase the rigour of both whole-school and departmental monitoring systems so that underperformance in students' learning and the quality of teaching is picked up quickly and addressed.