

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

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

Direct T 0117 3115319
Direct F 0117 3150430
Direct email: matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com



20 October 2011

Miss Katrina Borowski
Principal
Eggbuckland Community College
Westcott Close
Plymouth
Devon
PL6 5YB

Dear Miss Borowski

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of
Eggbuckland Community College**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your college on 18 October 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the students and the Chair of the Governing Body, who gave their time to meet with the inspectors.

Contextual changes since the previous inspection include a change of specialist status from technology to the arts and a new Chair of the Governing Body.

As a result of the inspection on 27 and 28 April 2010, the college 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 college has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In 2010, the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics improved from well below average for the previous two years to broadly average. The college's data for 2011 indicate a further rise of two percentage points and a significant rise overall in attainment in GCSE and equivalent qualifications. Students' learning and progress were at least satisfactory in most, and good or better in a minority, of the 21 lessons observed during the visit. Students say their lessons are becoming 'more interactive – not so much text book learning', and this was seen to be the case. They particularly enjoy, and feel they make most progress in, the specialist arts subjects. The college's decision to change the specialist status from technology to the arts has enhanced the focus on creativity

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and independent learning across the curriculum. For example, open-ended questions are being used in more subjects to encourage creative thinking. For instance, in a biology lesson on the theory of evolution, students were challenged to consider the topic by discussing in pairs how giraffes got their long necks.

While students' progress and the quality of teaching are improving, the proportion of good and outstanding lessons is not yet approaching 85%. In the good and outstanding lessons observed during this visit, teachers made good use of the challenging targets the college has set for individual students to plan tasks at the various levels of ability. Frequent feedback from students was used effectively not only to check their understanding, but also to extend it. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher constantly adjusted her approaches to meet the needs of individual students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, the students engaged in a variety of speaking, listening, reading and writing tasks, and made rapid progress towards challenging targets. In lessons taught less well, assessment information was not used to match teaching closely enough to the differing needs of students, particularly less-able and more-able students.

The college provides increasingly effective training, mentoring and coaching to develop the quality of teaching. The impact of this was seen in teachers' developing use of probing questions. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson where the teacher's different levels of questioning led students to clarify their own misconceptions and extended the explanations from more-able students. However, not all teachers are skilled in extending students' responses. There is greater consistency across the college in the use of six-weekly assessments of students' work. While students know their target levels and grades, they do not know how to reach them in all subjects, which slows progress for some. A new marking policy engages students in identifying what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work. In art, drama, music and English lessons, detailed feedback increasingly helps students to know how to improve their work, but this is not consistent across all subjects.

Good progress has been made in improving the impact of leaders at all levels on raising students' achievement. Key to this success is a consistent and systematic approach by senior and subject leaders to monitor and evaluate the progress of individuals and groups of students towards challenging targets. Teachers are held to account to provide appropriate intervention for any students who are identified as underachieving. Subject leaders' skills include data analysis, lesson observations, review of schemes of work and examination of teachers' planning and students' work books. Regular reviews of the curriculum ensure it better meets the needs of students, for example with the introduction of vocational education, including BTEC qualifications.

The capacity of leaders and governors to drive improvement has been strengthened. The local authority has provided effective training for governors. Members of the



governing body now request regular information, including the levels of students' progress, and ask challenging questions to hold the college to account for its achievement. The School Improvement Partner supports all leaders effectively in their monitoring and evaluation of the college's work, for example through joint lesson observations. As a result, self-evaluation is becoming increasingly accurate and improvement planning is promoting the rising trend in attainment.

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

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate students' progress and increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons to 85% by January 2011 by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment data consistently well when planning lessons so that work matches the needs of individual students
 - asking probing questions in lessons which give students opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially the more-able students
 - ensuring consistency in the use of day-to-day assessment so that all students understand the subject-specific actions that they must take to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels on raising achievement by:
 - sharpening the way in which leaders measure and evaluate the impact of the actions that they are taking to improve students' outcomes
 - using the strong partnership established with the School Improvement Partner to extend the capacity of leaders and governors still further through coaching and training.