

Tribal
1–4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0117 3115319
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 3150430
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct email:** matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

24 November 2011

Mrs Hilary Harris (executive headteacher)
Mr Richard Berry (acting headteacher)
Bristol Gateway School
Long Cross
Bristol
BS11 0QA

Dear Mrs Harris and Mr Berry

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Bristol Gateway School

Following my visit to your school on 22–23 November 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2011. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bristol.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2011

- Urgently improve the quality of students' learning, progress and attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - have sufficient subject knowledge
 - tailor work to the individual needs of students
 - apply consistent behaviour management and deploy additional adults effectively.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum so that there is sufficient coverage and progression in all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - reviewing the current structure and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders, including governors
 - providing appropriate professional development so that all leaders play a full part in accurately monitoring the school's performance and driving improvement.

Special measures: monitoring of Bristol Gateway School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 22–23 November 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents. Eight lessons were observed. Meetings were held with each member of the senior leadership team, a large group of teachers and support staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two officers from the local authority.

Context

The school continues to be led by an executive headteacher and an acting headteacher. Some subjects continue to be taught by supply staff and unqualified teachers. Four teachers and four teaching assistants were appointed in September. The Key Stage 3 leader and the Chair of the Governing Body are also new to their posts. The local authority recently allocated a new school improvement officer. The local authority retains financial responsibilities. Formal consultations are taking place for a hard federation with the local primary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, with February 2012 as the prospective date for the arrangements to commence. The purpose of the off-site provision, formally known as The Dugout, has been revised and it is now known as Cashmore House Unit. Fifteen students currently attend this provision, most in Years 10 and 11 and most on a part-time basis.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The assistant headteacher for curriculum and assessment has done a good job in revising the system and procedures for tracking students' attainments and progress. The first set of assessments is underway and covers all subjects. The information currently available is therefore insufficient to show students' progress since September but the arrangements now establish a clear system for doing so as the year progresses. Students' progress and attainments can now be tracked against targets that are appropriately challenging, based on the levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 2. Students generally make satisfactory progress in lessons. This improvement is a result of better teaching and behaviour management, resulting in greater participation and enjoyment by students. The work in students' books does not provide a good enough record of their learning. Staffing difficulties in the mathematics department mean that students do not achieve as well as they should in that subject. Not all Year 11 students who left in July achieved as much as they should because of inadequacies in the provision over time. But, because the leader of Key Stage 4 put additional support in place, some students made accelerated progress towards the end of Year 11. Most left with some nationally recognised accreditation and most have gone on to further education.

Attendance remains low and the picture is a mixed one. The new Year 7 students attend well. The Year 11 students attend very poorly, some not at all. The attendance for some students has improved considerably as a result of high profile, formal, consistently applied procedures established by the assistant headteacher for behaviour and attendance. High rates of exclusion and part-time programmes at Cashmore House Unit affect attendance.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Urgently improve the quality of students' learning, progress and attendance – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The general pattern of reduced periods of exclusion and incidents of inappropriate behaviour continues, although there are some peak periods, which usually either coincide with staff establishing higher expectations or can be attributed to individual students. It is very noticeable that the school day is calmer, with few students out of class and some good responses from those who return to class after an incident. Swearing is not now commonplace and students respond well to staff's reminders about 'language'.

The effectiveness of provision

Classroom staff have successfully regained control of what happens in the classrooms and the quality of teaching has improved. Some inadequate teaching remains but is no longer the norm. There is a much greater focus on learning in teachers' plans and in lessons. The use of learning objectives to structure lessons is now commonplace, as is consistently appropriate management of students' behaviour. Opportunities for students to achieve the learning objectives through tasks that suit their different levels of ability and interest are not well established. Students do not get sufficient feedback on how well they are learning because there are too few opportunities for independent work. There is a lack of work in books and work is often not marked. Teachers often talk too much and encourage too much discussion as a means of managing potentially disruptive behaviour rather than allowing students sufficient time to show what they can do and to learn from their mistakes, both in respect of their behaviour and their learning. Making sure that teaching assistants contribute actively and sufficiently to students' learning is an area that the staff have identified themselves as one of the next areas for improvement. Computers, laptops, interactive boards and scientific equipment are often used to good effect. The new arrangement for 'catch up' is working well to reinforce the importance of learning and resulting in less time out of class. At times, staff absence remains high and has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and students' achievements.

Following several training days before the start of the September term, a new, draft behaviour management policy is in place. Staff confidently and collaboratively 'hold the line', enabling most students to respond well to higher expectations in class and around the school. The points system is being reviewed.

The curriculum has been further improved since the last visit, with significant changes in place for the beginning of September. The length of the school day now meets guidelines, providing adequate time for teaching. The balance of times for each subject is now equitable and more opportunities in place for accreditation for Key Stage 4 students. A daily 20-minute lesson for basic literacy and numeracy, organised around groups of similar ability, is in place for all students. Revised arrangements with the taxis make a much smarter start and end to the school day. A review of the rationale for individual, therapeutic support allows for tighter monitoring. A review of the provision at Cashmore House Unit allows similar possibilities but has identified significant issues. The school, together with the local authority, must take action to ensure that all students are appropriately placed here and that all have full-time programmes as a matter of urgency.

Students came back to school after the summer break to a newly decorated building and have taken good care of the brighter, cleaner surroundings. Relocating the staffroom has provided an additional classroom, as well as improved facilities for staff. Further improvements are planned for January.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching – satisfactory.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum so that there is sufficient coverage and progression in all subjects – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The professional development days prior to the start of the new academic year were used well to further embed and explore systems and procedures for teaching and behaviour management. As a result, the new school year got off to a good start, with high expectations of staff and students set out clearly, and monitoring arrangements established and understood. Staff morale is high and staff feel that their views are heard and taken into consideration. They know what needs to be done and feel well supported to do so.

The right things are now in place. Since the inspection in January 2011, the headteachers have quite rightly used their energies to uncover the extent of the school's problems, to establish the appropriate systems and procedures, to ensure that they are understood and that staff have the necessary time, skills and support

to do what they are being asked to do. They have also spent quality time developing the roles of the senior leadership team. Their monitoring has improved and provides sufficient information to start to unpick areas of underperformance and possible reasons for it. As yet, evidence of specific impact on students' outcomes is limited and the whole team is very aware that now is the time to be teasing out where improvements can be linked to actions and built upon. The school's action plan has run its course and a new one that links with accountabilities for senior leaders for their particular responsibilities is timely.

The appointment of a new Chair of the Governing Body has brought a renewed sense of urgency to the work of governors. Individual governors have taken oversight of each of the most important areas of improvement and they increasingly seek information from staff so that they can question their effectiveness more thoroughly.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership and management – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority continues to provide the right balance of support to help the school to move forward. The new school improvement officer, in consultation with the senior leadership team, is about to review how all of those supporting the school can best coordinate their work. Staff speak highly of local authority consultants and value the support as well as the challenge. The local authority progress review group has met on three occasions since the last visit to track the school's progress.