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Mrs G Lock-Bowen
Headteacher
Css Ne Quadrant PRU
The Mile End Centre
Turner Road
Colchester
CO4 5LB

Dear Mrs Lock-Bowen

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Css Ne Quadrant PRU

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected you on 13 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to your students, staff and members of the local authority for the help they provided.

As a result of the inspection on 9 December 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.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Students' achievements have improved, with much emphasis placed on improving GCSE outcomes. Work in art at GCSE is impressive and is of an above average standard. Students' achievements have improved because of two key developments. First, the curriculum has been enhanced. Good progress has been made in ensuring a wider range of accreditation in information and communication technology (ICT). Seven different courses are available. Though some are new, where outcomes are known they have been encouraging. Second, monitoring and tracking systems have been improved. There is now a centralised system and target setting and monitoring procedures are now far more detailed. The progress made in applying these systems is satisfactory because staff are not using the information sufficiently to guide their planning. In addition, too many students in Key Stage 4 remain uncertain about their target grades and what they need to do to improve.



The quality of teaching

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving teaching and learning, though inconsistencies remain. Most observed lessons featured good or outstanding learning, though a minority were no better than satisfactory. These outcomes reflect the service's and the local authority's own monitoring. Learning is stronger in Key Stage 4 because teaching is better and more consistent. Learning is most effective when students are set challenging and interesting tasks and where they are required to work independently or in small groups. This is a feature of teaching in art, especially at the site in Clacton. In the less effective lessons, creativity is stifled. Teachers do too much of the work and the subject matter is not consistently presented in interesting and relevant ways. In some lessons, opportunities to hone students' literacy and numeracy skills are not consistently seized. Key words are not always displayed or fully discussed. Some of the written tasks set lack challenge. In a Key Stage 3 mathematics lesson observed the students knew the answers, which they tended to shout out. They were not encouraged to explain their answers by discussing the methods they had used. Behaviour is generally good but, when lessons become too teacher focused, concentration is inclined to slip and some students become restless and inattentive. This is particularly so in Key Stage 3. This slows the pace and impedes the quality of learning. The dissemination of good teaching practice is progressing satisfactorily.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Enterprising approaches have been adopted to promote student participation. Part of the daily timetable is for students to spend time with their staff reflecting on how well the day has progressed, with students reviewing their learning, behaviour and attitudes. The service has ensured that staff have been properly trained to facilitate these sessions. This initiative has been so successful that it is now normal, especially in Key Stage 4, for the students to lead the sessions. Discussions with students showed that they like the opportunities for reflection. It has helped with their behaviour management and a number referred to their work improving because they feel valued and better motivated.

Each centre is safe and secure. Good progress has been made in ensuring high standards, including training for all staff on intervention strategies.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Self-evaluation continues to improve. The satisfactory support offered by the local authority has helped secure improvements, especially the ICT systems that aid record keeping and ensure better monitoring of the performance of every student. Although inconsistencies remain, achievement, teaching and learning, the curriculum and the way students' progress is tracked and monitored have all improved. These developments indicate satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Bill Stoneham
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

Strengthen the centre's provision by ensuring that all staff:

- ensure that consistently high expectations are reflected in challenging tasks in lessons
- use a wide range of approaches to engage students, including the use of ICT to support teaching and as an independent learning tool
- include opportunities for students to practise and learn literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects
- ensure that all students review their learning as well as their behaviour and attitudes during lessons
- provide a wider range of accreditation to suit students of all abilities, especially in ICT
- are suitably trained in positive handling techniques.

Increase the centre's capacity to improve by ensuring that:

- it completes implementation of plans to use ICT to track students' progress and analyse the performance of different groups
- all available data are analysed to gauge the effectiveness of the provision on outcomes for students
- all leaders have the skills they need to make effective use of data in self-evaluation.