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Mr B Jordan
Headteacher
Bebington High Sports College
Higher Bebington Road
Wirral
Merseyside
CH63 2PS

Dear Mr Jordan

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Bebington High Sports College

Following my visit to your school on 9 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, students, members of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Officer, the National Leader in Governance who is supporting the Governing Body and representatives of the local authority. The school development and improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

No major changes to staffing have taken place since the inspection. However, the school is in the process of reviewing curriculum and subject responsibilities to provide specific leadership for aspects of its development plans.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors are taking very effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection highlighted shortfalls in the quality of teaching, students' attendance, and leadership and management, including in governance. The school is dealing decisively with each of these areas for improvement. Senior leaders quickly revised their development plans in the light of the inspection findings. The new plans are tightly focused on the issues raised and the plans are now being implemented. For each area for improvement the school has openly welcomed external support. It has also mobilised its own resources effectively, clearly demonstrated by the determination of leaders at all levels to raise the quality of provision in support of the students.

Evidence of early gains is clear. The consistency of marking of students' work, its assessment and the quality of feedback to students is much improved. The trend of improving attendance, noted in the inspection, has continued. It currently stands at a level above that normally seen in the majority of secondary schools. The school's success in raising attendance must be seen against contextual factors that are very disadvantageous. The school retains the confidence of parents and the community. The 2013 intake is set to be the largest intake for many years, despite falling numbers of secondary-age pupils in the locality. The success of the school's continuing outreach work within primary schools through its sports leadership programmes is a highly positive factor in the school's positive student recruitment record.

Improvements to teaching and learning are the major focus for leaders at all levels. Work has begun on providing better for the most able and for Year 7 students, planning lessons that engage students more actively and that provide more opportunities for students to develop independence. Teachers now discuss how their teaching builds effectively on shared best practice and how lessons ensure opportunities for the practice of basic skills and personal development. Senior leaders more rigorously monitor quality and progress and they enlist external moderators, who confirm their judgements. Middle and subject leadership is now characterised by enthusiasm and innovation. New coordinators work closely with colleagues and teachers, mentoring those whose lessons are not yet good in quality. To this end, the school deploys advanced technology in the form of micro cameras so teachers can analyse their lessons, find out for themselves what works and what might be done better. Overall, leaders at all levels are highly reflective about teaching, learning and the curriculum that best meets students' needs. Students themselves, across all age groups, are very positive about the school. They have confidence in the staff and appreciate the quality of education the school provides.

The Governing Body, like the senior and middle leaders, has reacted energetically to the criticisms made by inspectors. A recent skills audit demonstrates that it has the necessary expertise and community representation to fulfil its duties. There are clear plans for enhanced involvement of governors in the life of the school and key documents are being developed to show, at a glance, where action by the school is required. These initiatives are designed to support questioning by governors of the school's leadership to provide the necessary challenge in meetings.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is receiving effective support from and brokered by the local authority. The support is in the forms of local authority advisory support and from a School Improvement Partner. The school also receives support from the National College through a National Leader in Governance, who is from the locality and who knows the school well. The school's leaders and the Governing Body are welcoming of external support and advice. To date, support and advice is confirming of the direction and actions leaders are taking. The school's leaders and governors, governors in particular, are benefiting from an outside view, for example, in how information to governors is presented and how their visits to school may be most effectively arranged.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for the Wirral

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector