

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 01173115323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com



26 October 2013

Mr Paul James
Headteacher
Crispin School
Church Road
Street
BA16 0AD

Dear Mr James

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Crispin School

Following my visit to your academy on 24 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

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

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

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, other members of the senior leadership team, a group of staff, groups of students and the chair and vice chair of the academy's governing body, who also sit on the academy executive board, along with other governors. I evaluated the academy development plan which has been written in response to the areas for improvement identified during the inspection, as well as other documents including your analysis of the 2013 GCSE examination results and your use and impact of pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from armed service families) funds.

Context

Since the inspection the academy has started to support a neighbouring academy, St Dunstan's School. You have taken on the role of executive headteacher of both academies. An Academy Executive Board, consisting of an overall chair along with the chairs and vice chairs of governors from both Crispin School and St Dunstan's School and yourself has been formed to oversee the governance of both academies. The two separate governing bodies continue to oversee individual academies. A deputy headteacher has been seconded to run St Dunstan's. Two assistant headteachers have been temporarily promoted to deputy headteachers. There have also been promotions for other leaders to assistant headteachers. Seventeen new teachers, including some who are new to teaching, started at the academy in September 2013.

Main findings

You have taken appropriate actions to improve achievement. Staff now have higher expectations of the grades or levels students are expected to achieve. Students know their targets and commented that they are expected to work harder and that their work is more challenging. In 2013 results for English language were at a similar level to those in 2012. You have recognised the need to build upon the academy's good results for English language, where students made good progress from their starting points, to target improvements to middle ability students with their English language skills.

Results in 2013 for mathematics show an improvement from those in 2012. Around a third of students gained a grade A or A* and over three-quarters gained at least a grade C. Given their different starting points the proportions of students making better than expected progress are consistently above average.

You have a strong tradition of mainly entering students for GCSE examinations with a few vocational subjects. When considering results for GCSE examinations only students make good progress from broadly average starting points.

Results from 2013 show a significant reduction in the gap for the standards of students for who the academy receives pupil premium funding and others in mathematics and overall. However there is no similar reduction for students in English language mainly because these students were in the middle and lower ability groups who did less well than the higher ability students. You have very well planned activities for 2013/2014 for students who receive additional support from pupil premium or Year 7 catch-up funds. These include support for their reading, writing and number work. These are reported to the governing body along with evaluations of how success they have been.

Lessons are now more engaging. Students say they have more opportunities to be fully engaged in their lessons because staff plan more enjoyable activities. Through a wide variety of professional development activities you have ensured that staff

have improved the overall quality of teaching, including how well they question students to ensure they understand what they are trying to learn.

Behaviour has improved. As the quality of teaching has improved more students are fully engaged in their learning and show positive attitudes.

You have done much to ensure students have a good understanding of the different aspects of bullying. You have worked effectively with the charity 'Stonewall' so that students have a good understanding of issues related to different sexual orientations, and those for transgender. Your work has been recognised by becoming a 'Stonewall champion'.

Students have discussed and agreed what language is inappropriate. They now recognise why it is inappropriate to use the word 'gay' as a derogatory term. They also understand that racist language, which is common place in some games played on consoles, is wrong. Students have an excellent understanding of people who follow an alternative lifestyle along with those from traveller communities.

Year 7 students say they have settled well into the academy. They report they have few worries and that students have made sure they were welcomed. The only worry which they had which had caused a problem was getting lost and not being able to find their correct room. This only happened a few times and students said other older students had been helpful when this had occurred.

You and other senior leaders, have a good overview of the quality of teaching through observations and 'drop in' sessions. Through work alongside external consultants you have also ensured subject leaders have an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching across their subjects with most supporting colleagues to bring about improvements. However not all leaders are as effective at improving the quality of teaching.

You have written a very clear development plan which identifies what needs to be done to bring about improvements. There are clear success measures which are linked to specific groups, for example students for which the academy receives pupil premium funds.

The governing body has a good overview and challenges the academy. It uses good information to check on how the academy is improving. For example information on the impact of pupil premium funded activities, the number and type of bullying incidents, behavior issues or racist incidents are shared with governors who then check to see how effective policies are in bringing about improvements. Governors also check to see if the evaluations of the quality of teaching are accurate by linking them to the rates of progress made by students in different classes.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

I will make further visits to support senior leaders evaluate the impact of the various initiatives introduced using pupil premium and Year 7 catch up funds. I will support less confident subject leaders to improve their observation skills and to aid them in identifying how teaching may be improved.

External support

You have worked well with the Stonewall to become a school's champion. Working alongside external consultants has meant your senior and subject leaders have an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning within lessons and over time. A senior leader attended an Ofsted seminar on the use of pupil premium funds.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Somerset and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector