

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5307  
**Email:** rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com



27 January 2014

Mr Mark Bland  
Headteacher  
Abbotsfield School  
Clifton Gardens  
Uxbridge  
UB10 0EX

Dear Mr Bland

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abbotsfield School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 November 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that leaders and governors closely check the progress that all groups of students are making at each key checkpoint, so that any underachievement can be swiftly addressed
- further accelerate the progress that students are making in English and mathematics, checking that teachers are consistent in their expectations of what students should do to improve.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other leaders, teachers and the Vice Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated. I carried out a scrutiny of governing body

minutes, tracking information and related documents. I visited lessons with you and an assistant headteacher.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection five teachers have left the school. Three vacancies have been filled by teachers new to the school. Two vacancies in English have been filled by teachers already employed by the school. In English, the number of teaching groups for Year 11 students has been increased from five to six.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher and governors have responded quickly to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. The action plan is detailed and ambitious in its timescales. Rightly, the key focus is on driving improvements in teaching and learning. Leaders have already ensured that teachers have received training on using data more effectively. This has helped them plan and deliver lessons which are better suited to students' starting points. Governors have recognised the need to scrutinise students' progress more closely. They have established two focussed committees to look at the progress of students in English and mathematics. The school's tracking information shows that students are making better progress in both English and mathematics when compared with the same period last year. A third of the cohort in Year 11 have already gained a GCSE at grade C or above in English and more have attained higher grades than in 2013. However, leaders are acutely aware that students' progress must accelerate even more rapidly, in both English and mathematics, if achievement is to match national levels recorded in 2013.

The headteacher has sharpened the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Middle leaders have benefited from training and support from senior leaders and other local schools. Subject leaders are more confident about ensuring that information about students' progress is used to assess the impact of individual teachers on achievement. Regular checks by leaders include lesson drop-ins and observations. Where weaknesses in the quality of teaching are identified, well-targeted action plans are put into place. There are effective arrangements in place for the best teachers to share their practice. Actions have had greater impact in English, than mathematics, where students' progress is accelerating more quickly. Further rigorous monitoring and support is being swiftly put into place to tackle this.

There are visible improvements in marking since the last inspection, and teachers are providing more regular feedback to students about how to improve. Where teachers use the school's 'feed-forward' strategy consistently, the impact on students' progress is evident. However, there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations; they do not always check that students have made the necessary improvements to their work. As a result, the progress for some students is less rapid than it should be, including in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

Governors have fully recognised the need to develop their skills. They have quickly gained a sharper understanding and knowledge of the impact of teaching on achievement. They have provided increasing levels of challenge to the headteacher, including the request for a school 'governor dashboard' to enable them to monitor the impact of the school's work more carefully. They are asking more incisive questions of leaders, including the heads of English and mathematics. Governors have rightly focused on 'drilling down' into information about students' overall achievement. However, their monitoring does not focus closely enough on the progress different groups of students are making towards their targets across all subjects, at each checkpoint.

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

### **External support**

The local authority has brokered effective support from outstanding local schools. This has included support from Local Leaders in Education. Teachers have benefited from high-quality training opportunities, which have included observing good practice and leadership development courses. The results of this are beginning to show in the faster progress that students are making. The local authority advisor has also supported the headteacher in sharpening the focus of the action plan, so that resources are deployed more effectively to drive the necessary improvements. Governors have received training from the local authority to improve their understanding of data.

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

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett

**Her Majesty's Inspector**