

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  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** Rachel.evans@tribalgroup.com

3 February 2014

Nigel Barrow  
Headteacher  
Shirley High School Performing Arts College  
Shirley Church Road  
Croydon  
CR0 5EF

Dear Mr Barrow

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shirley High School Performing Arts College**

Following my visit to your school on 29 January 2014, 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 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:

- include more precision in its post-Ofsted plan about how leaders will monitor the actions to which they are linked
- strengthen the arrangements for developing literacy across the school and for monitoring and evaluating its impact.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other leaders, a group of teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I spoke with the Principal of Hayes High School, who is a National Leader of Education (NLE). I made brief visits to lessons with you and a

deputy headteacher to look at students' work. I evaluated the post-Ofsted action plan and reviewed other relevant documents.

## **Context**

The responsibilities of the senior team have been extended to be more closely linked to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Three teachers are undertaking some leadership responsibilities, so that one of the assistant headteachers can develop the use of the pupil premium funding. The school has appointed a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. A student support assistant has left and been replaced.

## **Main findings**

You, your senior leaders and governors have rapidly introduced key changes to tackle the areas for improvement outlined in the last inspection. This is reflected in the school's action plan, which has measureable success criteria to assess its impact of actions on the progress made by different groups of pupils. However, deadlines for actions to be completed and monitored are not stated. This limits leaders' capacity to hold staff to account.

Teachers' marking is providing guidance for students about how to improve their learning which is a change since the last inspection. Teachers are looking more closely at students' responses to their marking and using this to assess their progress. Staff are receiving training and coaching in the use of new teaching approaches to improve students' learning. However, work for the most able students is not always sufficiently challenging.

The use of information to track the progress of individuals and student groups, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, has improved. This is because half-termly meetings have been introduced for leaders, including those in the sixth form, to meet with staff, to discuss students' progress and agree what changes are needed to improve teaching. Additional support for students at risk of not reaching their targets is also identified at these meetings. This is supporting teachers in using students' assessment information to target and address those at risk of underperforming in their subjects, including in mathematics.

A member of the senior leadership team has produced an action plan to ensure the school's pupil premium funding is targeted to support students in Year 7 to Year 11. As a result, teachers are now more able to target their teaching to improve the learning of these students in lessons and provide any additional support for them. In addition, the heads of year and student form tutors are involved in putting targeted

support in place for these students, if they are at risk of underachieving in any subjects.

You and other leaders have begun to implement a range of initiatives to develop students' literacy skills. Nonetheless, the impact of this work has been limited. This is because teachers are not always clear about which are the priority initiatives; and leaders have not been given precise information to help them assess the impact on students' learning. Weekly lesson observations, completed by senior and middle leaders, assess the quality of teaching across the school and in the sixth form. Information from lesson observations is now used to target teachers who require support to improve their practice and to inform teachers' in-service training.

The commitment and determination of the governing body to improve the school is shown by meeting on four separate occasions since the last inspection. An external review of governance has been completed and governors have drawn up an improvement plan. They show an improved understanding of how pupil premium funding is used and its impact on students' achievement. A governor has also been appointed to oversee the impact of the pupil premium funding. A group of governors is being identified to hold leaders to greater account for the quality of information about students' progress. The impact of the school's post-Ofsted actions will be evaluated by governors supported by the Principal of Hayes High School.

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**

You have commissioned the support of NLEs, a National Leader of Governance and external consultants to help you quickly drive improvement. Since the last inspection, the Principal of Hayes High School has made six visits to the school. These visits have been focussed on helping leaders to write the post-Ofsted action plan and advising the governing body on their contribution to school improvement. External support is also being used well to validate leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Education Funding Agency and the Director of Children's Services for Croydon.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**