

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 0117 311 5359
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

3 February 2014

Ms N Bassett
Headteacher
Peacehaven Community School
Greenwich Way
Peacehaven
BN10 8RB

Dear Ms Bassett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Peacehaven Community School

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 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 October, 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, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the Local Leader of Education currently providing support to the school, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school action plan, information relating to the monitoring of teaching and information about pupils' current progress. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to a number of classes where I spoke to students about their work and looked at their books.

Main findings

Senior leaders were disappointed by the judgements of the inspection but it is clear that you are determined to drive improvements forward as quickly as possible. The recent analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development is precise and accurate. You have drawn up an action plan that is sharply-focused on the right priorities.

Clear expectations have been established for the marking of students' work. Workbooks show that detailed feedback is being given to students about how well they are doing and how they can further improve. Opportunities for students to respond to this feedback are less frequent and there is inconsistency about how this is done.

Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are sharper. You are using a variety of information including from students' books and lesson observations to accurately identify the strengths and areas for development in teaching. Lesson observation documents show that teachers are given useful and detailed feedback which enables them to improve their practice. Effective training and support is appropriately directed to improve weaker teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving. Current assessment information shows that students in all year groups are making good progress.

Middle leaders are engaged in more rigorous monitoring of their departments. This means heads of department are increasingly accountable for raising standards and this is enabling them to play a more prominent role in improving the quality of teaching across the school.

The use of information about how well students are progressing has improved, and as a result many staff are planning lessons that better meet the range of students' needs. However, inconsistencies remain and not all teachers are using assessment information well enough.

The development of students' literacy and communication skills are a key focus for improvement. As a result, students are being given more opportunities for extended writing across different subjects. The importance of these skills has been effectively promoted in variety of ways, for example the introduction of a school radio station and reading assessments for all Year 7 students. You recognise that students' aspirations and ambitions need to rise. A range of valuable opportunities are being created across subjects to support the school's work in this area. Examples of this include the participation of Year 10 students in the local authority's 'Rising Tides Project', and the engaging and prominent display showing the various career paths followed by former students.

Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school. The governing body has been strengthened this academic year with the recruitment of three new governors who bring relevant skill and expertise to the role. As a result the governing body is providing a greater degree of challenge to the senior leadership team, including asking more challenging questions about students' progress.

External support

Since the inspection, the degree of support from the local authority has grown. They are providing useful advice and guidance in the development of literacy skills. They have brokered the support of a Local Leader of Education, who is providing valuable assistance in enhancing the use of assessment information and the systems used to monitor and track students' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

Her Majesty's Inspector