

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

9 May 2014

Mr S Mackay
Headteacher
Sir William Romney's School
Lowfield Road
Tetbury
GL8 8AE

Dear Mr Mackay

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sir William Romney's School

Following my visit to your school on 9 May 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 February 2014. 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:

- reflect on their own practice and identify any further strategies that may be effective in raising the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium funding by attending the Ofsted pupil premium conference.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, students and members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. There were also a number of short visits to lessons and a telephone call was made

to the school improvement partner. The school improvement plan was evaluated and students' current achievement and attendance data was scrutinised.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staffing at the school since your recent inspection. You have implemented a faculty system to create heads of faculty who are responsible for the leadership of several subject areas. A significant number of students join the school at times other than the start of Year 7.

Main findings

You have made a good start in addressing the areas identified as in need of further improvement following your recent inspection. Your school improvement plan had already highlighted these areas prior to the inspection. As a result, the school is continuing to improve.

There is a continued focus on ensuring that the quality of teaching is at least good. A range of effective training opportunities have been put in place for teachers, which are developing specific aspects of teaching. To support this initiative, some teachers have an individual development plan. These plans are short-term. They provide teachers with a range of developmental strategies designed to improve the quality of their teaching. These plans are working well.

You have recently implemented new marking initiatives. Teachers now ensure, when they mark students' work, that they indicate what students have done well and what they need to do to improve. Evidence of this marking was observed during the short visits to lessons. Students indicate that this style of feedback is enabling them to make better progress as they are clear on what they need to do to reach the next level. Students say that teachers give them time to read their comments and to respond to them to evidence that they understand how to improve their work.

An attendance officer has been appointed to help improve students' attendance. She works closely with students and their families to address any barriers preventing the student from attending regularly. You give attendance a high priority. High expectations of attendance are communicated to students and parents regularly. Incentives are in place to reward good attendance for students and these are having a positive impact. These initiatives have improved students' attendance rates, which are now in line with the national average. The proportion of students who are persistently absent from school has fallen and is also now average. The attendance officer has begun to work with students who will be transferring from feeder primary schools into Year 7 to identify any support that students and families may need prior to their arrival in September 2014.

You restructured the leadership of departments in September 2013. Heads of faculty are now responsible for the leadership of several departments. This development has enabled senior staff to implement a far more consistent approach towards monitoring the quality of teaching being delivered. Senior leaders have high expectations of their staff. A timetabled system has been initiated for senior leaders to review performance in their faculties. Senior leaders hold heads of faculties to account for these reviews. The reviews are repeated throughout the year to ensure that any areas identified for development are being tackled effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement is improving.

The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. The extra government funding is being used to ensure students eligible for the pupil premium funding, and those entering the school below the expected level in English and/or mathematics, receive high quality support to enable them to catch-up as quickly as possible. This support is delivered by the special educational needs coordinator and two other qualified teachers. The achievement data from these groups indicate that these students are making accelerated progress.

The gap between the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers has been too large. The school's current achievement data indicates that there is still a large gap predicted for Year 11 students in 2014. Data for the rest of the school, however, indicates that the gaps are reducing significantly.

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 are accessing good external support. A school improvement partner visits regularly and her records of visits show a good balance between challenge and support. She has conducted observations of teaching alongside senior leaders and her evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is improving. You have also developed strong links with local schools. This enables you to share the most effective practice from each school's senior leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
Her Majesty's Inspector