

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

6 June 2014

Mr Jonty Archibald
Head of School
Regents Park Community College
King Edward Avenue
Shirley
Southampton
SO16 4GW
Dear Mr Archibald

Special measures monitoring inspection of Regents Park Community College

Following my visit with Ann Short, additional inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress toward the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint up to a maximum of five newly qualified teachers on the staff for September.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Southampton.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement so that they are good or better in all subjects by making sure that:
 - all teachers have the highest expectations of what all students are capable of achieving and always insist on the highest standards of presentation of work and behaviour
 - teachers ensure that work is accurately matched to the skills and abilities of all students
 - teachers monitor the progress that students make in lessons so that they can modify the activities for students who find the work too easy or too hard
 - teachers' marking and feedback is accurate and helps students improve their work
 - lessons proceed at a suitably brisk pace so that students can learn quickly.

- Improve the impact of leaders and managers, including governors, on raising standards by ensuring that:
 - demanding, but achievable, targets are set for all students which reflect high expectations, particularly in Key Stage 3
 - the targets set for teachers to improve their teaching are rigorously checked to assess how effective they are, and that the targets are modified during the year if required
 - the systems for helping teachers to develop their skills and share expertise are rigorously monitored and evaluated to see if improvements in teaching are helping students to achieve to the best of their ability
 - all those responsible for leading and managing subjects are appropriately skilled and have a good impact on improving achievement, teaching and behaviour
 - the school development plan clearly identifies how the objectives will result in improving students' achievement and how this will be checked at regular times throughout the year
 - all teachers, teaching assistants and supply teachers use the school's behaviour management system consistently and appropriately
 - students' behaviour is regularly monitored and evaluated in all departments and at senior leadership level
 - all teachers have the right skills to enable students to develop their reading, writing and communication skills in all subjects
 - the views of parents and students are regularly sought, evaluated and acted upon where appropriate.

- Improve governance so that the work of the governing body has a positive influence on behaviour, teaching and achievement by:
 - making sure that the targets which are set for teachers to improve their teaching are appropriately monitored and reviewed

- ensuring that it receives information which is accurately interpreted for them by senior leaders about the school's current and past performance
- acting on the findings of the external review of governance.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited lessons, met groups of staff, groups of students, three members of the interim executive board (IEB), and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. They scrutinised documents including school development plans, records of behaviour monitoring such as exclusion records, and data concerning students' academic progress.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, one member of the senior leadership team has left. Her roles as assistant headteacher and coordinator for special educational needs have been filled by other staff. Two staff have taken on temporary roles as part of the leadership team. The school continues to be led by an executive headteacher, who also leads a nearby school and works with the head of school under a partnership agreement lasting until the end of December. Other colleagues from her school are also involved in training and development work at Regents Park.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The gains in achievement reported in the last monitoring inspection have been built on and students are making better progress in all year groups. More lessons include the practical, engaging tasks which the school has identified that students learn from effectively because they help students understand the ideas being studied. For example, a student talked about using clay modelling as a way to remember facts about land formation in geography. Much effective support has been provided for Year 11 students as they have approached their examinations, and their progress is improving in subjects where it has been weaker in the past. This means variations in progress in different subjects are reducing. The school knows there is further work to do to ensure consistently good progress in all subjects, and in all year groups, but is well focused on achieving this. Students known to be eligible for free school meals continue to catch up with others due to increasingly good support, driven by staff awareness that this group need to do better if their attainment is to match their peers. Students with special educational needs are also making better progress over time, although less so in mathematics than in other subjects. More-able students are set the more challenging goals of which they are capable, and are making better progress towards them, although some opportunities are missed to stretch them.

The quality of teaching

Staff enthusiasm to improve teaching remains a feature of the school, and they are sharing good practice more effectively. Staff continue to improve lessons to meet students' varying needs, trying different strategies to ensure students are not all doing the same work, regardless of their ability. In this respect, increased use of

small-group work is paying dividends as a way of teaching groups of students about particular areas of learning, while others work on their own. More teachers prepare work at differing levels to meet students' differing needs, although too often, more-able students have to complete easier stages before getting to the harder work, when they could go straight to it. The development of students' literacy skills is not systematic enough. Some good examples were seen of staff explicitly noting new vocabulary, extending discussion to include new words or including literacy points in marking, but this is not consistent, especially in Year 7.

Teachers are checking progress in lessons more effectively, often punctuating lessons with useful discussion and questioning. Some really strong examples were seen of staff reviewing students' knowledge, sharing good ideas and getting students to test and extend each other's thinking. Sometimes, this process required better management, notably when interesting exchanges between a teacher and a student were not shared with the rest of the class to check they had all understood. The use of 'thumbs up/down' to self-assess student confidence is not used well enough to give teachers accurate feedback on students' progress. Students' responses are not always checked to make sure the thumb is in the right place.

There is more evidence of teachers referring helpfully to students' target levels or grades in lessons and in marking. While marking remains of mixed quality, it is more regular and students are increasingly being required to respond to it. Most students spoken to knew their targets, and increasing numbers knew how to reach them. Teachers' more frequent reference in lessons to the qualities of work linked to different grades is really helping students think about how to move on.

Students who speak English as an additional language are not routinely supported well enough in class, and staff do not always have the right knowledge about what to do to support these students. The deployment of additional adults to support these students, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, is variable. Some effective examples were seen where they were used well by teachers, but this was not consistently true, and there is too little provision for early stage learners of English on arrival.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour continues to improve and students report feeling safe at the school. Most students now approach learning positively with increasing engagement in lessons. Year 11 students were keen to point out that many have taken full advantage of after-school and weekend revision sessions. Teachers are exploiting students' willingness to learn more fully, for example being confident that students will usually participate sensibly in discussion. In a minority of lessons, staff do not exploit students' positive attitudes, for example demonstrating the use of equipment in circumstances when getting students to take the lead would be more productive. There remain some disruptions to learning, but it is increasingly rare, and most staff respond properly to it, using the school's agreed approaches. Around the site, the

majority of students behave sensibly and are respectful to each other. Staff supervision has improved and most, but not all, students said any behavioural issues are picked up quickly. Closer monitoring of behavioural incidents by leaders means they are responding more effectively where there are concerns, such as over groups of students, times of the school day or subjects. School leaders are rightly setting the bar high for acceptable behaviour while working hard to reduce fixed-term exclusions. These remain high but are falling. Students value the newly introduced rewards system, although the long-term impact has yet to be seen.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders are working well as a team to sustain the staff focus on teaching. The executive headteacher provides clear direction and works well with the head of school to manage tasks between them. The capacity of the school's senior team has grown with support from the partner school. More of the work to improve teaching and monitor the quality of learning is now done by Regents Park leaders. Training for staff is well targeted at individual needs and common areas of weakness. Staff are taking more ownership of their development, including using their training logs to identify and record what they are working on and store leaders' feedback. They are sharing good practice more effectively; inviting colleagues to come and see lessons and offering training for others.

A restructuring of the senior leadership team has improved the way subject performance is checked and the oversight of the key areas of the school's work: teaching and behaviour. Following training, subject leaders are more involved in monitoring and improving teaching, and in analysing student assessment information to identify which aspects of departmental work need to improve. This remains a work in progress but, with the heads of year also being more involved in tracking their year group's academic and pastoral progress, a more purposeful contribution is being made by the school's middle leadership.

Senior leaders have improved the school's development plan through more explicit evaluation of the impact of actions, and outline planning for next year. This now needs extending with clear statements of academic targets for year groups, subjects and different groups of students, alongside the action on teaching and behaviour required to bring them about. Planning for sustained growth in leadership will mean decisions about the long-term future, including the partnership with the executive headteacher's school, need to be made as it currently ends in December.

The IEB is working well to challenge and support leaders over the work being done to improve teaching. They have good skills and question closely over students' progress. They are managing the recruitment of a shadow governing body in a timely fashion and are suitably involved in planning the school's long-term leadership and direction.

The leadership of provision for disabled students, those with special educational needs and students who speak English as an additional language has recently changed hands. The post-holder has started reviewing the school's work and identifying areas for improvement so that these two groups can be consistently well provided for, but there is further to go to ensure they make good consistent progress.

Further useful steps have been taken to improve opportunities for parents and carers to communicate their views. These now include academic review evenings three times a year when they will be able to let staff know what they think.

External support

The local authority continues to monitor the school's progress well through a linked adviser. It is rightly fully involved in decisions over the future of the school, including the partnership with the executive headteacher's school.