

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 01216 799164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



27 June 2014

Ms Shan Schanda
The Headteacher
Blythe Bridge High School
Cheadle Road
Blythe Bridge
Stoke-on-Trent
ST11 9PW

Dear Ms Schanda

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Blythe Bridge High School

Following my visit to your school on 26 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 March 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 ensure:

- teachers consistently use and apply the school's assessment and marking policy
- teachers' planning and delivery of lessons consistently meet the needs of individual students
- students' progress in reading and comprehension is monitored and reviewed at half-termly intervals.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, other school leaders and the Chair and three members of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings were held with the subject leader of English, the literacy

coordinator and a representative of the local authority. I was shown around the school and visited six lessons in Year 10 English. During these visits I looked at the work in students' books and spoke to them about their learning. I also met with eight students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. I evaluated the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's information about students' progress, attainment and reading ages.

Context

Since the inspection in March, a number of staff have relinquished their roles of responsibility and two teachers have left the school.

Main findings

The headteacher and senior leaders have taken incisive action to act on the inspection findings. School leaders have prioritised improving the quality of teaching and students' learning. Students say that the feedback they receive from the majority of teachers using the recently introduced 'Comment, Progress, Response' (CPR) approach enables them to improve their work. However, students said that the use of this method varies from teacher to teacher. This was also evident from the scrutiny of students' books. Where feedback is clear and specific, students' mistakes and misunderstandings are identified and corrected and the quality of students' work improves. Where feedback is less effective or vague, students' mistakes, for example in the use of English language, are not corrected and persist throughout their work.

Since the inspection, school leaders have ensured that the majority of teachers are planning lessons that are not too easy or too difficult for students of different abilities. This has been achieved through a more focused use of the information they have about students' progress. The majority of teachers use 'data packs' to inform lesson planning. This effective practice ensures learning activities are used to meet the needs of individual students. The work in students' books shows that the majority of students are given work that challenges them and enables them to make rapid progress. Students say that more teachers are meeting their individual needs. However, where planning is less effective, students' individual needs are not met and as a result progress is slower.

The recently introduced tracking system and half-termly 'data manager reports', enable school leaders and teachers to systematically monitor and evaluate the progress of students including different groups of students, such as those that are disabled or have special educational needs. School leaders are using this information to hold teachers and subject leaders to account for students' progress and to provide intervention for students who are not making the progress expected of them. These reports show that an increasing number of students are making expected and better than expected progress. The gap between boys' and girls' progress and attainment is closing as is that between students in receipt of the pupil premium grant and

those who are not. However, the use of the data manager reports is inconsistent across departments.

Reading standards across the school are low. Information provided by the school shows that in Years 7, 8 and 9 over 50 percent of the students have reading ages below their chronological age. The improvement of reading, therefore, is a priority for the school. This is recognised by school leaders.

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 provides appropriate support for the school. They do this through Core Group meetings and the commissioning of relevant support from, for example, a teaching school alliance. The local authority have also provided support to the governing body and helped to produce an effective school action plan.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries
Her Majesty's Inspector