

Tribal
Kings Orchard
One Queen Street
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

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

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

18 September 2014

Ms Maggie Segrove
Principal
Oakbank
Hyde End Lane
Spencers Wood
Reading
RG7 1ER

Dear Ms Segrove

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oakbank

Following my visit to your school on 18 September 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 May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure the system to track students' progress is fully functioning as soon as possible and uses information from all the Key Stage 2 assessments areas, including reading, writing and the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test
- develop teachers' questioning skills so that questions are more demanding and teachers probe the answers students give
- make sure all teachers in English apply the same standards when they mark work so their marking is more accurate.

Evidence

During the visit, I met you met with you, your senior leaders, the subject leader for English, the Chair of Governors, the principal of Oxford Spires (your partner academy) and the Chief Executive of the school's sponsor, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. You accompanied me on visits to English classes and we also made brief visits to a number of other classes. I evaluated the school's action plans.

Context

The new principal joined the school in September 2014. Approximately half of the current teaching staff joined the school at the same time.

Main findings

Despite being in post for a brief period, the actions you are taking are moving the school in the right direction. You are thinking carefully about how best to improve the school and have high expectations of the pace of change. You are rightly sharing these high standards with your staff and students.

The Chair of Governors has relevant educational experience and knowledge. He has put in place many of the recommendations from the review of governance. There are now just two committees, one of which focuses entirely upon learning and achievement. The Chair has a sophisticated understanding of how different stakeholders can appropriately contribute to the school. This has enabled much needed improvements around the site to be actioned quickly. Governors have seen the school at work and have used these visits to challenge you to make changes. However, governors do not have a good enough overview of students' progress to help them in robustly holding the school to account.

The action plans are closely matched to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Governors are rightly involved in checking the success of the actions taken. However the changes you make as a result of governors' and leaders' checks are not specified in the plan. You identify the intended impact that planned changes will have on teachers' planning but there is insufficient detail about the difference made to students' achievement.

Teachers are now consistently using information from the work they mark to group students according to their ability and identify individual student's learning needs. However, students across all ability ranges are not being consistently challenged to do better. Teachers are sometimes too accepting of the answers that students give to the questions they ask. They are missing opportunities to probe students' understanding further. Teachers in English classes rigorously follow the school's

marking policy and provide time for students to improve their work. However in some English classes, work is graded too generously. This means teachers have an inaccurate view of the progress students make. Students in the classes visited responded to the raised expectations teachers have of their conduct. They now present themselves and their work with pride and show that they are keen to learn.

Leaders have made improvements to the way teachers plan lessons. The tasks which are planned help students gain the skills they need to progress in the subject. Leaders and teachers are not making enough use of information from Key Stage 2 tests and assessments to identify students who are falling behind in writing or reading since joining the school. There is not an effective whole-school system for tracking students' progress.

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 received very effective, tailored support from your partner academy. The principal of your partner academy has been helping you to monitor the quality of teaching. She has provided you with the services of both her vice principals to strengthen your school's leadership. Further help to improve the way you track students' progress is planned. The partner academy and sponsor have helped to develop the governing body and coach individual governors. The sponsor is providing additional support for governors to resolve any remaining staffing and recruitment issues and has checked some of the school's safeguarding procedures. The sponsor promotes high aspirations and high standards for the school. It has regular contact with the Chair of Governors to discuss the improvements being made and their impact on students' progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, CfBT, and the Director of Children's Services for Wokingham.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard
Her Majesty's Inspector