

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 3115307
Direct F 0117 3150430
Rachel.evans@tribal.gov.uk

21 October 2014

Mrs C Fraser
The Headteacher
Castle Business and Enterprise College
Odell Road
Walsall
West Midlands
WS3 2ED

Dear Mrs Fraser

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Castle Business and Enterprise College

Following my visit to your school on 20 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour and attendance at the school.

Evidence

I considered a range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence including current information about pupil absence and exclusions
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

Castle Business and Enterprise College is a special school for primary and secondary aged pupils with moderate learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have

more complex needs, including severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. There are currently 115 pupils on the school roll. These pupils are taught in 15 classes, two primary and 13 secondary. More than half of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority). This is well above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion known to speak English as an additional language are similar to those nationally.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since the previous inspection in July 2013, pupils' attendance has continued to improve. School leaders have actively promoted the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents. Holidays in term time are no longer authorised. Information about pupils' attendance is analysed every week so that any patterns of absence or declining attendance are quickly spotted and are followed up promptly and rigorously by the school attendance officer and an education welfare officer. This sometimes includes home visits. A small number of parents have been prosecuted for not ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Good attendance is celebrated in weekly achievement assemblies when certificates are awarded to pupils with 100% attendance. Special trips are enjoyed by pupils who maintain full attendance over a term. As a result of these actions, overall attendance is now much closer to the average for schools nationally. The number of pupils who are persistently absent (more than 15% of sessions missed) has also reduced.

At the time of the previous inspection, behaviour was judged as outstanding. Since then, school leaders have continued to make improvements to the way that pupils' behaviour is managed. There are five simple rules for behaviour in lessons which all pupils understand. These are clearly displayed in every class and are consistently reinforced by staff. During my visit, pupils from different classes were able to explain that they receive up to five credits in each lesson for keeping the rules. They were enthusiastic about the prizes they can earn using credits and about the rewards for the class with the most credits each week. Pupils also had a clear understanding of the sanctions for poor behaviour. They explained that if work is not completed, or a pupil continues to shout out or is unkind to others, then that pupil has to attend a detention in 'The Zone'. These detentions are usually at break or lunchtime, but may be after school for more serious misdemeanours. Pupils may be sent to 'The Zone' during lessons if they are spoiling learning for others or behaving dangerously.

'The Zone' is a small cluster of rooms centrally located within the school, just off the hall. It is staffed throughout the school day by two or more members of staff, including a member of the senior leadership team. Sometimes, pupils simply complete the work they have not finished in class. At other times, when pupils are angry or upset, staff allow them time to calm down before helping them to reflect on the reasons for their behaviour and supporting them to develop strategies to manage their feelings and behaviour better next time. Pupils sometimes choose to take themselves to 'The Zone' at break times in order to get support and calm down. This makes a difference to their behaviour. One older student proudly explained that she now rarely needs to go to 'The Zone' and gets almost all her credits in lessons.

Pupils are very well supervised from the moment they arrive at school until the time they leave at the end of the school day. Pupils are greeted by name when they step off their bus and are welcomed again as they enter the school building. On the playground there is good staff supervision. Pupils are accompanied by members of staff when they move between classes or go to the hall for assembly or physical education (PE). However, staff go far beyond merely supervising pupils well, instead they take every opportunity to model good manners and appropriate communication. They engage pupils in conversation and look out for any who may be feeling unhappy. Senior staff maintain a high profile around the school and ensure that a member of the team is always available to help deal with any challenging behaviour. Pupils agreed that the high levels of supervision seen during the inspection were typical. They recognise that the staff care about them and want them to do well.

Pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly and display very good manners. They listen to staff well and follow instructions carefully, for example at the end of assembly and when returning to class after break. In lessons, they pay attention and join in with the interesting activities planned by the teachers. Support staff make a very significant contribution to pupils' excellent behaviour in lessons, for example by using prompt cards with simple symbols to give reminders about the expected behaviour.

Pupils get along with one another very well. At break times, many pupils chat in small friendship groups whilst others play more active games. Pupils are very tolerant of one another and treat other pupils with respect. For example, in a whole school assembly, pupils listened very attentively to a class of Year 8 pupils who spoke, sometimes very nervously, about the Hindu festival of Diwali. The pupils applauded them generously for their efforts.

Detailed and thorough records are kept of behaviour incidents, bullying incidents, exclusions and of any occasions where physical intervention is required. Meticulous records are also kept of any referrals or visits to 'The Zone'. Senior leaders regularly analyse the information in these records to look for any trends or identify any groups of pupils whose behaviour requires additional support. Records show that, as a result of the consistent use of the behaviour strategy and the very good support provided to individual pupils, the relatively small number of incidents of poor behaviour is reducing even further. This is recognised by almost all parents who agree that the school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. A very small number of parents expressed concerns to me about the management of behaviour and bullying, although they say that some improvements have been made. During the inspection, pupils told me that bullying is very unusual and expressed confidence that staff would always sort it out

The success of the school's strategies for managing and improving pupils' behaviour means that fewer pupils receive fixed term exclusions. The number of pupils who had one or more exclusion in the last school year was much closer to the average for schools nationally than in previous years.

Priorities for further improvement

- Work with parents to further improve the attendance of pupils and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Continue to reduce the number of occasions when pupils are excluded from school by developing further strategies and expertise in supporting the very small number of pupils with the most challenging behaviour.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Walsall and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel
Her Majesty's Inspector