

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 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com



8 July 2015

Mr A Minchin
Headteacher
The Robert Napier School
Third Avenue
Gillingham
Medway
ME7 2LX

Dear Mr Minchin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Robert Napier School

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 2015, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 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:

- Set targets for the progress different groups of students will make by key points in the future.
- Make sure leaders and governors are well-placed to evaluate the success of the school improvement plan at each review point. Ensure the plan defines the starting point for each action and the amount practice will have change by each review.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, your senior leadership team, the executive Principal of the trust, the executive headteacher of the soon to be reconstituted academy trust, and members of the local advisory board to discuss the actions taken since the

last inspection. I scrutinised documents, including the school's improvement plan and information about students' progress. I also briefly visited lessons and held discussions with middle leaders.

Context

The Fort Pitt Academy Trust is joining with Thomas Aveling School to form a new trust from September. The headteacher of Thomas Aveling School will become the executive headteacher of The Robert Napier School and Thomas Aveling School. A new chair for the local advisory board, who is a national leader for governance, will take up position in September. The previous headteacher of The Robert Napier School left in April 2015. You joined the school as headteacher at the same time.

Main findings

You have seized the initiative and brought new direction and focus to the improving the school. You have quickly found out what needs to get better. You have a suitably ambitious plan in place to tackle this. You have restructured the senior team to make sure each area of work has clear leadership and there is enough capacity to drive rapid improvement. Your new approach to tackling poor behaviour and low-level disruption is starting to make a difference. You have set higher expectations for students' behaviour and how teachers and leaders manage it. You thoughtfully consulted with students and staff to make sure they see new approaches as fair. Senior leaders patrol the school to pick up any issues of concern. They provide support to staff when needed. This increased senior leadership presence reinforces the message that the school does not tolerate disruptive behaviour. You have introduced a helpful system for recording incidents of disruptive behaviour. The new system helps leaders to identify repeat offenders more easily. This improved approach also leaves you well-placed to measure the success of your approach and adjust it as needed.

Before your arrival, leaders had improved their approach to checking the quality of students' work and capturing and sharing good practice. You have made sure this good work continues and evolves. A senior leader frequently checks students' books to look at the quality of marking, students' responses and progress over time. A regular staff bulletin reports the findings and includes examples of good practice. Middle leaders say this has nudged them to also check books frequently. They know that at any moment they may have to account for any poorer practice seen. Presentation of work and teachers' feedback are improving. You are making sure subject teams get time to share and develop good practice. Teachers who need to improve the most, receive helpful coaching support. Previously, leaders had not considered well-enough how to capture and report the progress of different groups of students. Consequently, exactly how many students are on track to make good progress in different year groups and subjects is not consistently clear to leaders and governors. You are rightly redesigning the school's approach to assessing and reporting progress to address this.

Since my last visit the local advisory board has undergone a helpful external review. The board is responding suitably to the findings. A detailed plan identifies how the board will work. It will now meet more frequently. It has determined exactly what will be considered at each meeting. New members with useful skills have been brought in. However, the board is not as well-placed as it needs to be to hold you to account for the success of the school improvement plan. The plan includes review points but does not detail exactly the intended impact of actions by each review. Starting points for each action are not defined.

External support

Trust leaders have increased their capacity to hold school leaders to account and provide support. The new executive headteacher has starting supporting the school. He has worked with senior leaders to review teaching quality. However, the trust has not set leaders targets for the progress that different groups of students, in each year and subject, will make by key points in the future. Without these targets school leaders cannot be held as tightly to account as they need to be.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Advisory Board, the Director of Children's Services for Medway and the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton
Her Majesty's Inspector