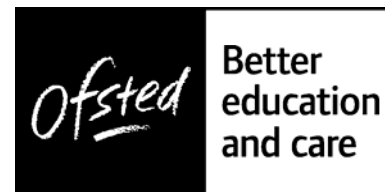


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4 May 2005

Mrs S Howell
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Howell

Implementation of Immanuel CofE Community College's Action Plan

Following the visit of Mr J Richardson HMI, Mrs L Phillips HMI, Mr C Humphreys HMI, and Ms S Hands, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27 and 28 April 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and limited progress overall since being subject to special measures.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Education Bradford and the Diocese of Bradford. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

IMPLEMENTATION OF IMMANUEL CofE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S ACTION PLAN

Findings of the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit 52 parts of lessons, four registration sessions and two assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher, the senior leadership team, some middle managers, the chair of governors, the chair of the collaborative board and representatives from Education Bradford. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, the headteacher designate, the three deputy headteachers, the chair of the governing body, the chair of the collaborative board, and representatives from the LEA and the diocese.

The school has appointed a new permanent headteacher. Although not required to do so, she may wish to revise the action plan in the light of her knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Standards in national tests and examinations were reported in the previous monitoring letter. Standards are rising. In lessons, they were generally below those expected nationally. However, some of the higher-attaining pupils reached national expectations and in some departments and some lessons, where the pupils were well taught, standards were close to the levels expected for their ages.

The pupils' learning was satisfactory or better in 36 of the 52 lessons, including 17 lessons where it was good or better. These figures are broadly in line with the school's most recent evaluation, and higher than the figures in the previous monitoring inspection. Where they made the best progress, the pupils had effective learning skills; for example, they applied themselves well, they collaborated productively, they were attentive to their teachers, and they were eager to succeed. Where too little learning took place it often reflected the pupils' indifference to their lessons and, in a significant minority of lessons, their hostility to the teacher. In a few lessons, the pupils made too little progress despite effective teaching, and this reflected weaknesses in the pupils' learning skills; for example, many of the pupils found it difficult to maintain their concentration and application in some lessons.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 39 of the 52 lessons, including 20 lessons where it was good or better. These figures are in line with the school's most recent evaluation, and higher than the figures in the previous monitoring inspection. A significant proportion of the good or better teaching was seen in art, science, and religious education, although there were examples of good teaching in individual lessons elsewhere in the school. There were too many lessons that were taught unsatisfactorily in mathematics and English. The effective teachers captured

the pupils' interest and worked through an appropriate range of activities at a good pace. In a mathematics lesson taught by an unqualified teacher, the teacher had prepared imaginative and challenging tasks that were matched accurately to the pupils' abilities. In an English lesson for low-attaining pupils, the teacher's good relationship with the pupils, and the well-prepared resources, helped the pupils deepen their understanding of emotive words. In the lessons that were taught unsatisfactorily there was a range of reasons why the pupils made limited or no progress, and the college could usefully explore further this range of problems, so that support can be more tailored to the teachers' needs.

The process of appointing a new permanent headteacher has contributed to developing significantly the relationships between stakeholders, including the collaborative board and the governing body. The collaborative board has a reliable view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has now set objectives for managing the performance of the acting headteacher.

The school has declared a budget deficit of around £200,000 for 2004-5. A balanced budget has been set for 2005-6. The school is discussing, with Education Bradford, its plans to repay its budget deficit within the next five years. A decrease in the number of pupils on roll has contributed to the school's sensible decision to reduce staffing levels.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and improving. The performance of the members of the senior leadership team has been reviewed, their roles have been realigned, and their job descriptions have been refined. Consequently, they have a much better understanding of their roles and are focused considerably more sharply on clear targets for bringing about the necessary improvements. They have a much increased feeling of urgency and a heightened sense of accountability. These have been communicated well to middle managers and classroom teachers, resulting in better teamwork and whole-staff direction. The senior leadership team has established a professional dialogue about the quality of teaching and learning, the pupils' progress and the management of their sometimes quite challenging behaviour. This is a positive development.

Some middle managers, including in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages have an emerging understanding of their role and an increased sense of their accountability. There is a renewed commitment to bring about improvements.

The school's self-evaluation is a concise and systematic account of the actions that have been taken to deal with the key issues. In some instances, including attendance and behaviour, reference is made to quantified evidence to evaluate progress. This is a good feature. Systems for monitoring the quality of provision are developing well and are underpinned by an appropriate balance of challenge and support to areas of weakness. The programme for reviewing the performance of individual faculties is providing senior managers with reliable information and contributes appropriately to improvement planning. The system of 'spot checks' is

helping the school to improve the consistency with which its policies are implemented.

The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were satisfactory or better in 42 of the 52 lessons; they were good or very good in 27. This is a significant improvement over the previous visits. Nevertheless, there were examples of inappropriate behaviour; for instance, low-level disruption, inattention and deliberate flouting of the rules. The less than satisfactory behaviour was not always related to unsatisfactory teaching.

The behaviour of the pupils as they move around the school is unsatisfactory. There are still too many examples of boisterous behaviour, particularly on the stairs. Pupils are careless of each others' welfare. Supervision is insufficiently rigorous or proactive; too few teachers are on duty at any one time.

The number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing and there have been no permanent exclusions so far this school year.

The pupils' behaviour in the Year 7 and the Year 9 assemblies was impeccable.

Whole-school attendance on the first day of the inspection was 85.2 per cent. Attendance so far this term is reported as 86.7 per cent. This is very low. Only Year 7 has an attendance figure of more than 90 per cent.

Education Bradford has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. It plans sensibly to review and adjust its strategy for supporting the school each term, as circumstances change. Support for the reviews of three of the faculties has been effective.

Action taken to make the improvements needed

1: raise attainment

The school has recognised that some of its information about the pupils' attainment is unreliable and has taken reasonable steps to rectify this. The deputy headteacher, who has recently taken responsibility for raising attainment, has started to use data more effectively and communicated the extent of underachievement to the teaching and support staff, increasing accountability well. There is a much sharper focus on those pupils who are close to achieving the level expected for their age: they are given a range of appropriate support, and responsibility for their success is placed firmly on their teachers.

The pupils are more aware of their targets and how they might reach them. The use of assessment remains too variable, although good practice was seen in several departments, including in English, history, religious education and art. Standards are reported above.

Progress is reasonable.

2: improve teaching and learning

The school has made considerable efforts to develop strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning. The implementation of a new quality assurance process, whereby individual departments are reviewed thoroughly has been well received and is having a positive impact. Feedback to the staff has been frank and incisive and has focused staff on issues relating to teaching and learning, strengthening teamwork and identifying areas for improvement. The school's staff development programme has appropriately included training on teaching and learning and thinking skills. Most staff are working hard to implement a range of whole-school approaches, such as the use of behavioural objectives and a common planning sheet, in order to develop a more consistent approach to teaching across all lessons, and it is clear that there is a stronger whole-school drive where staff are working effectively together. These strategies for improving teaching and learning are well-considered and provide staff with clear guidance on what are the features of an effective lesson at Immanuel College.

Progress is reasonable.

3: improve management at all levels

A new permanent headteacher has been appointed from September 2005 and arrangements are in hand to appoint two deputy headteachers. Some responsibilities, including for raising attainment and the leadership of the English department, have been reassigned. There has been some training for middle managers and a programme for reviewing provision in each department has been introduced. The school plans appropriately to evaluate the provision in each faculty by the end of term.

Progress is reasonable.

4: improve the pupils' behaviour

Under the leadership of a new acting deputy headteacher the school's behaviour policy has been reviewed and new procedures have been introduced. There is a more rigorous approach to rewards and praise and improving consistency in the use of sanctions. Staff, parents and pupils have been involved throughout. The introduction of the new policy has been effective in improving behaviour in lessons but not yet around the school.

Progress has been good in establishing an appropriate framework for improving behaviour and is reasonable overall.

5: improve the pupils' punctuality to college and lessons and continue to improve their attendance

The pupils' punctuality to school shows slight signs of improvement. The number of pupils who are unpunctual has fallen, although the headline figure has not. Punctuality to lessons is generally satisfactory. Attendance remains too low and has not improved. In some lessons during this inspection there were full classes, but in others, particularly lower-attaining groups, the attendance was very poor.

Recent staff appointments to support improving attendance have been made and plans are in hand to develop their roles. This is a promising development.

Progress is limited.