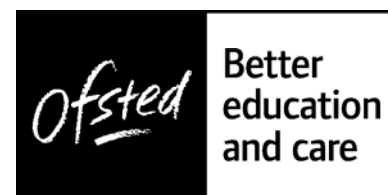


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3 February 2006

Mrs J Tiller
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Dear Mrs Tiller

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF IMMANUEL CofE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction

Following my visit with additional inspectors Mark Wilson, Ron Bulman and Derek Aitken to your college on 1 and 2 February 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fifth monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures in January 2004.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

During the visit 47 parts of lessons, 1 registration session and 3 assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the senior leadership team, some middle managers, other nominated staff, 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.

Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment were reported in the previous monitoring letter. Although higher than in 2004, results in 2005 were well below the national average overall. The college has a clear picture of where the pupils made the most and the least progress. The most recent, and very thorough, analysis shows that there has been a significant overall improvement in the pupils' achievement in Year 11. The college has used this analysis to identify the pupils who are at risk of not gaining five or more higher grade GCSE passes and to direct resources accordingly. These include a well-considered programme of mentoring. Some of the pupils in Year 11 spoke very positively about the effectiveness of their mentors.

The pupils made adequate or better progress in 40 lessons, including 18 where it was good or better. Where their progress was satisfactory or better, the pupils knew what they were expected to learn and found the work interesting and challenging. Where they made insufficient progress, the pupils had weak attitudes to learning and did not attend regularly.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- Raise attainment – good progress

Personal development and well-being

Strong leadership on improving behaviour has established successfully an ethos for learning. Pupils now behave well in and around the college. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory or better in 42 lessons and were good or better in 20.

In the majority of lessons, teachers are now able to get on with the job of teaching and pupils are able to learn. However, where there is unsatisfactory teaching pupils exhibit poor attitudes and behaviour, including the inappropriate use of mobile telephones. Effective support is provided to teachers in developing classroom management skills.

The college has built upon its behaviour strategies with a more consistent, responsive system, resulting in fewer pupils about whom it has serious concerns. Pupils see as inevitable the range of sanctions for inappropriate behaviour and increasingly this proves a deterrent. Issues now dealt with generally are low-level involving fine tuning behaviour to maximise learning. The shorter lunch break, the introduction of student liaison officers, and the removal of an afternoon registration period have resulted in calmer afternoon sessions.

The number of fixed term exclusions so far this year is high largely because of the college's continued intolerance of abusive language. However, the numbers are starting to fall, and permanent exclusions have not increased. Exclusion within college is now effectively used as an alternative to exclusion from college. A group in Year 8 has been created for pupils exhibiting the most challenging behaviour. The teaching they receive from a small cadre of teachers has improved their behaviour.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- To improve the pupils' behaviour – good progress.

Satisfactory progress has been made on developing systems for monitoring punctuality and attendance. In the short time since the last inspection however, this has had limited effect, though unauthorised absence has decreased.

Attendance for the autumn term was broadly similar to that in the previous year. At 90.6%, attendance on the first day of the inspection was higher than at the last monitoring inspection, but is still lower than the national average. At 88%, attendance so far this year is broadly similar to that at the previous monitoring inspection. Years 7 and 8 are the only year groups with attendance over 90%, though this is an improvement to that seen at the last inspection.

There is a sound plan to improve attendance and punctuality, with rewards for good attendance and behaviour. Some systems and procedures have been established: truancy to lessons is now monitored; an additional attendance officer assists checking on late pupils and; student liaison officers effectively shepherd pupils to college on time. However, punctuality to lessons remains inconsistent and delays the start to some lessons.

The college is well aware of the work it still has to do to improve attendance and punctuality and is getting to grips with the issues. However, it remains concerned that the current level of education welfare support it receives is not sufficient to help it achieve its goals.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- to improve the pupils' punctuality to college and lessons and continue to improve their attendance – satisfactory progress.

Quality of provision

The improvement in teaching and learning has been reasonable. Of 47 lessons observed, 40 were at least adequate, 19 were good or better and one art lesson was outstanding. The most effective teaching reflects the well-focused training, monitoring and evaluation recently initiated in school. Senior and middle managers are well aware of where teaching and learning are most effective and where improvement is required.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge, so pupils gain much from their expertise. Teachers usually relate well to their classes, managing them firmly and often with good humour. Consequently challenging behaviour is less frequent, although some low level disruption persists. Most lessons are well planned, with

teachers making clear presentations and summaries, often brightly illustrated using information and communication technology (ICT). These skills complement short, varied activities requiring learners to work independently, or with their peers. In such lessons productivity is at least satisfactory, often good and outcomes correspond to challenging targets. Where the teaching was inadequate, tasks were dull and not matched accurately to the pupils' different needs. Teachers failed to manage the pupils' behaviour effectively.

The use of assessment to aid learning has much improved recently and is now satisfactory. Whole college systems are well thought out, comprehensive, and involve parents in regular reviews. Departments such as science have particularly well-developed and accessible systems for targeting and tracking pupils' progress. Many teachers now regularly set challenging targets reflecting National Curriculum levels and external examination grades. In several subjects these contribute much to the progress pupils make. In a few subjects, however, teachers still do not all take full advantage of this important source of motivation. The quality of marking is too variable. It ranges from good, detailed individual comments and grades to unsatisfactory instances where pupils' work remains unmarked for too long.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- improve teaching and learning – satisfactory progress

The well conducted assemblies provided a very positive start to the day. They conveyed moral and spiritual values in a thought provoking way that engaged all of the pupils very well. The Year 9 assembly promoted a genuine sense of awe among the pupils. Behaviour was exemplary.

Since the last visit, the college has sought to improve the provision for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Recent initiatives have included: contributions to the college's improved tracking systems for Year 9 and Year 11 pupils; revised individual education plans (IEPs); a useful presentation to heads of departments on these pupils' needs; and the establishment of a standing committee. All of these initiatives are well-designed in principle to increase the effectiveness of the special educational needs department in the longer term. Moreover, external support and a full curriculum audit is calendared for the very near future. It is too early to evaluate the outcomes of most of these planned improvements. A nurture group has been established for a small group of Year 8 'at risk pupils'. Their needs were being met well. The department is starting from a low developmental base and there are significant hurdles to overcome.

The principles of data analysis and full accountability are only now being firmly established. Staffing is insufficient to meet the increased number of pupils on the register, and is further affected by staff absence. Staffing in the learning support unit (LSU) is also in transition. The effectiveness of the learning support assistants (LSAs) varies. Useful support is offered by other staff, such as technicians. Very many pupils are identified for behavioural concerns and are at the 'school action'

stage. The Special Educational Needs department is reliant on subject departments in following IEPs to cope with them. The revised IEPs continue to lack sufficient precision both to provide specific guidance for teachers and as a basis for planning next steps. The co-ordinator of Special Educational Needs has accurately identified the areas for improvement needed in subject classrooms to help pupils achieve better. As yet, teachers' lesson planning for the most part merely lists pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and rarely reflects the need to identify appropriate strategies, including approaches to boost pupils' literacy levels.

Leadership and management

The governing body has been reconstituted and includes a well balanced mixture of appropriate expertise. The collaborative board intends to hand the running of the school back to the new governing body in the near future. Plans for a joint meeting between the collaborative board and the new governing body are well considered. The college is finalising plans with Education Bradford to reduce its accumulated budget deficit of around £500,000 over the next five years and has appointed a new business manager.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. Much has been accomplished in the seven weeks since the previous monitoring inspection. In particular: the system for assessing the pupils' attainment and tracking their progress has been established under the dynamic leadership of one of the deputy headteachers; there has been an extensive review of the curriculum and the recent reorganisation of the school day has contributed to improvements in behaviour in the afternoons.

The headteacher leads by example. She has communicated very effectively her relentless focus on improving the achievement of the pupils and her vision is shared by the teachers. The recently held review day at which targets were shared with pupils and their parents has energised the college and provided a renewed sense of purpose. She has the confidence of the staff who speak warmly of her high expectations that are balanced by an appropriate degree of support.

The deputy headteachers comprise a strong team that has played a key role in leading improvements. Support for other senior staff has heightened their awareness of the strategic part of their role and contributed to developing a sense of teamwork. Middle managers have made an increasingly effective contribution; some despite the staffing difficulties in their areas. The recently introduced arrangements of 'standing groups' has begun to contribute to greater consistency in many areas. However, the college is aware that although it has made good progress in establishing and refining systems and policies that have been underpinned by appropriate training, they are not always applied consistently both within and between departments. There are good arrangements for dealing with the planned for changes in staffing of the senior leadership group as the school becomes less reliant on external support.

The college has a very detailed picture of its strengths and weaknesses on which it has based good plans for bringing about improvements. In a short time, the headteacher and her team have established a momentum for change that is already starting to become evident in improvements in the pupils' achievement.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2004:

- improve management at all levels – good progress

External support

The school values highly the work of the specialist consultants from Education Bradford. The school improvement partnership board (SIPB) has made sensible arrangements for ensuring there is a smooth transition when the collaborative board hands back delegated powers to the new governing body. The executive headteacher has made a good contribution to improvements. He has brought in appropriately experienced senior managers, built relationships, dealt well with complex financial and personnel matters and established firm foundations on which the headteacher is building very effectively.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress in the seven weeks since the previous monitoring inspection – good

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to improve provision for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Continue to develop the role of the assistant headteachers
- Improve the consistency with which the college's policies are implemented.

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.

Yours sincerely

J Richardson HMI
H M Inspector