

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk



28 March 2007

Mrs W Tomes
The Headteacher
Hartshill School
Church Road
Hartshill
Nuneaton
Warwickshire
CV10 0NA

Dear Mrs Tomes

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 March 2007 with Heather Weston HMI, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to your senior team, the middle leaders with whom we met, the chairs of the interim executive board (IEB) and the shadow governing body, and the staff and students who provided information or talked with us during the day.

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.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 July 2006, the school was asked to raise students' achievement by improving their learning and the quality of teaching; improve the effectiveness of some subject leaders; set students more challenging targets; and use these targets to plan for their learning.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making outstanding progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

The school has relentlessly pursued improvement on all fronts, and this has been highly effective in improving students' learning and enabling them to make better progress. You have an extremely clear and well articulated vision for the school which is wholeheartedly echoed by the senior leadership team. Since your appointment in September 2006 this vision has been translated into a well structured strategic plan which, alongside a range of well

organised and thoroughly evaluated monitoring activities, has led to significant improvement in a very short time.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The leadership team has a very accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning. Rigorous and effective action is being taken to eradicate the little inadequate teaching which remains. The proportion of teaching which is consistently good or better has risen each term, and the school's work to improve this further is innovative. The school has been plagued by gaps in staffing, particularly in mathematics, and has struggled to fill some posts. A thorough recruitment programme has led to key appointments being made, ready for the start of the new academic year. Moreover, in the interim, the school has worked very well in partnership with another local school and the local authority to ensure that Year 11 students in particular receive the teaching and support they need in order to reach their targets. The school has rightly identified that the next step will be to focus further on the development of students' learning skills.

The appointment of a senior leader to oversee the work of the middle leaders has been pivotal in enabling them to develop confidence and competence in their roles. As a result, the quality of middle leadership is greatly improved and constantly developing. Middle leaders are highly accountable and have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities for raising standards and improving achievement. Importantly, the role of heads of year is now focused on removing barriers to students' learning. Middle leaders have been well trained to be able monitor and evaluate effectively the work of their teams. Regular middle leadership meetings crucially include the sharing of good practice. Secure line management by the senior leadership team ensures that middle leaders are both supported and challenged.

The school has set challenging targets for all students in all year groups, both for the end of the key stage and the end of each year. The school's data indicates that, overall, Year 11 students are making steady progress towards meeting their targets which, if met, would lead to much improved GCSE results in 2007 compared with 2006. Senior leaders have a realistic picture of whether teachers' assessment is sufficiently accurate. In the few areas where it is less secure, suitable support has been provided to staff and there has been steady improvement as a result. A very rigorous tracking system enables the school to notice quickly when students are not making enough progress. A meticulous process leads to swift action being taken by heads of year, heads of department, form tutors and teachers. Well designed new planning formats take students' targets into account. Whilst some variability in marking remains, this has improved considerably since September. Staff have been given suitable support to improve their practice and this has been well received. In a recent monitoring exercise carried out by the school, most students were able to describe the next steps in their learning. This was also

the case during the monitoring inspection. This is aided by a clear form in the front of their exercise books in which students record their targets.

The local authority has provided the school with a wide range of useful support. This has been particularly valuable in developing middle leaders' skills. In particular, departmental reviews which are carried out alongside the middle leaders are helping the school to develop its capacity to improve further. The support provided by the executive headteacher has been suitably focused and has been welcomed by the school. This relationship has facilitated the development of very good partnership working which has supported staff's professional development. A shadow governing body is in place and is ready to take on full responsibilities as soon as appropriate.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector