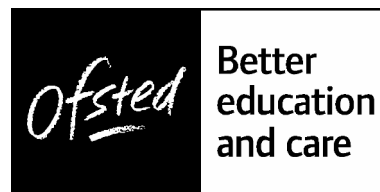


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Mrs J Patterson
The Headteacher
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12 March 2007

Dear Mrs Patterson

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 March 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please would you also pass on my particular thanks to the two very helpful students and to your School Improvement Partner, for taking the time to meet with me and for giving me very useful information.

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 7 and 8 February 2006, the school was asked to improve the curriculum, the monitoring of teaching, and the collection of information on students' achievements. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

There has been good progress in improving the curriculum. The school has significantly widened the range of subjects which students can undertake at GCSE level. At the same time, the students are now able to choose from a greater variety of accredited vocational programmes which are well matched to their needs and aspirations for future employment. The restricted accommodation continues to prevent the school from providing practical elements of science and design and technology (DT). However, the school is making an increasing number of effective partnerships with external providers including other schools and colleges. One aspect of these links is that the Will Adams staff are beginning to provide useful expertise and guidance, for example in behaviour management, in exchange for access to facilities and resources. Through these mutually beneficial schemes, it is planned that by

September 2007 students will be offered an even greater choice of subjects, including science and DT.

Efforts to improve the monitoring of teaching have been good. The school now holds a monitoring week six times a year during which every member of the teaching staff is observed by a senior manager and given comprehensive feedback on strengths and areas for development. The school has made good use of its School Improvement Partner to check that the senior manager's judgements are accurate. Staff report that the system is fair and helps them as individuals to improve their performance. The next step for the school is to use the information it has gathered to draw more general conclusions about strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. This will enable it to identify areas for professional development for the whole staff, and to assist in the sharing of good practice.

The school has made slower, but satisfactory, progress in collecting information on students' achievement. This is because it has made a higher priority of improving the curriculum and the quality of teaching and because of the quality and inconsistency of information about the students' prior achievements. Nevertheless, the school has introduced a regular timetable for assessment procedures as well as a robust and straightforward system to track students' progress. Staff are now beginning to make a clear link between their own teaching, tracking and target setting, and are starting to enter their own assessment information into the system. It is planned for the system to contain all the available information within the next few weeks. There is further work to do with staff on setting specific and measurable individual targets alongside students, and in reinforcing these consistently in all lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee
Additional Inspector