

Cambridge
Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01223 578500
Direct F 01223 578501
risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



8 June 2007

Mrs W Sharp
Mortimer Wilson School
Grange Street
Alfreton
Derbyshire
DE55 7JA

Dear Mrs Sharp,

Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 16 and 17 January 2006, the school was asked to enhance students' literacy skills, raise the quality of teaching so that all students make good progress, and improve attendance.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the impact of progress the school has made is inadequate because students' achievement and attendance are still not good enough. This visit has also raised serious concerns about standards and I am recommending a return visit.

Since the last inspection there has been a steely determination from the headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT) to improve teaching and raise standards. Necessary robust discussions are ongoing to highlight the link between the quality of teaching and the rate of progress students make. Tough decisions have been taken that have successfully raised expectations and there is evidence that some teaching has improved. However, the current proportion of satisfactory and weaker teaching is not tackling past underachievement effectively. Although the need to improve teaching and learning is seen as fundamental, the poor quality of learning environments in some classrooms undermines progress.

The percentage of 5 A*-C in the GCSE exams in 2006 fell from the previous year and standards were very low. In November the school was right to judge achievement and standards to be inadequate, based on the evidence of the 2006 results and following a poor set of mock GCSE exams. The school has responded by setting up a

good range of activities to support students as they prepare for their exams. The SLT has sensibly identified students who need that extra support and encouragement to achieve 5 A*-C and all staff are made aware of these. There is generally an optimistic attitude that results for 2007 will improve but these are unlikely to equate to satisfactory progress in all areas, especially in English.

The school is focused on raising standards and is making some reasonable changes to provision. For example, changes made to the number of GCSE courses students take have better suited their abilities. Likewise, organising English classes into ability sets in some year groups is helping to better match teaching to the range of students' needs.

The school has focused more on developing students' literacy skills and has put in place a number of strategies to improve teaching. There is some evidence that these are having a positive impact but not on a scale to significantly improve these skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Despite the school's best efforts attendance remains an issue. This is especially the case in Year 11 where low attendance rates and non-attendance to exams endanger students' potential exam success. Having said this attendance figures have improved this year confirming the effectiveness of a range of initiatives and working partnerships with other agencies. The work of the school's attendance officer is having some success through the use of a series of rewards and contacting parents on the first day their child is absent, especially with a small number of targeted students. Student support officers are also ensuring effectively that students get to lessons throughout the day.

The SLT is leading the school in the right direction but the limited proportion of good and better teaching, which results in low standards, is holding back progress.

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

Yours sincerely



Andrew Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector