

Suite 22 West
Lancs
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

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

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320

23 November 2009

Mr A Worthington
Queensbury School
Deanstones Lane
Queensbury
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD13 2AS

Dear Mr Worthington

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Queensbury School

Following my visit with Susan Bowles HMI, Paul Lowery HMI and Christine Harrison, Additional Inspector, to your school on 19 – 20 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Interim Executive Board (IEB), the Director of Education for Bradford and Education Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Queensbury School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 19 – 20 November 2009

Evidence

Inspectors visited 37 lessons and scrutinised documents, teachers' planning and pupils' work. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the partnership headteacher, other leaders, members of staff, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority and the school's National Challenge Adviser. A telephone discussion was also held with the chair of the school's Interim Executive Board (IEB).

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection 7 staff have left the school and 4 staff have been appointed including a new leader of personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Most aspects of the 2009 GCSE results show an improvement on those for 2008. However this improvement in standards is only modest for several of the important indicators. External analysis of the results indicates that pupils in last year's Year 11 made better progress than the previous Year 11 but that their progress remains significantly below that expected for these students. Hence achievement remains inadequate at this stage. However, the school's tracking data indicates that the progress in the current Year 10 and Year 11 is broadly satisfactory and that there is likely to be a further improvement in GCSE results in 2010. This tracking data reflects inspectors' judgement that pupils currently make at least satisfactory progress in most, though not all, lessons and in much of their written work. This satisfactory rate of progress is sufficient to produce satisfactory achievement for most students, though not for those who have a history of significant under-achievement. The school is pleased with the improvement in its teacher assessment results for the end of Key Stage 3. There is a general indication that standards have risen and that students now make better progress in Years 7 to 9 than they did previously.

The school now sets targets for individual pupils which are intended to be suitably challenging. However, there are too many examples of individual targets not being used well enough to be genuinely helpful in raising pupils' attainment. The school has improved its tracking system and it is now more rigorous in identifying pupils who are under-achieving. Teachers then intervene with various strategies, including extra lessons and mentoring, to ensure that pupils get back on track. The school's recent improvement in achievement has been largely gained as a result of these interventions rather than as a result of improvement in the quality of teaching in

mainstream lessons. The school's specialist school targets for 2009 were generally met in information and communication technology. However they were not met in mathematics in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school is aware of the reasons for the weaknesses in 2009 GCSE mathematics results and is taking appropriate action to ensure it does not happen again.

Achievement in the sixth form was satisfactory at the time of the section 5 inspection and it remains so. There has been some improvement in students' overall achievement since that time but there is still too much inconsistency across subjects.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards and improve students' achievement particularly at Key Stage 3 – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

The school has continued to improve behaviour since the last monitoring visit and this is reflected in the ongoing reduction in the number of recorded incidents in the classroom. Pupils confirm that behaviour continues to improve and that learning in lessons is now less frequently interrupted. However, there are still a significant number of incidents logged each week and the school recognises that the behaviour of a small minority of pupils remains a concern. During the inspection some of the incidents of low level disruption seen were associated with lessons where the curriculum, or the challenge offered, did not meet the needs of learners well enough. Exclusion rates have continued to decline. However, although overall incidents of exclusion are now broadly average, the average number of days lost due to periods of fixed term exclusion remains considerably higher than the national average. The school is now making more use of its new behaviour tracking systems and analysing this data in order to direct interventions and support for staff, student groups and individuals. Particularly successful approaches to improve behaviour since the last monitoring visit include the higher staff presence on corridors, the restructuring of the behaviour support team and the relocation of the withdrawal rooms to more appropriate accommodation. The school is also now using a wider range of strategies to manage the most challenging pupils, including more personalised curriculum programmes, and separate on and off-site provision. Case studies would indicate this is helping to further reduce serious incidents in the classroom and provide pupils with learning experiences more suited to their particular needs. Attitudes to learning as reflected in attendance show that absence rates have increased slightly over the past 12 months and the school is aware that attendance levels are currently below national averages. Plans are in place to address this area of underperformance.

The school has taken a number of effective steps to address deficiencies in preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural society. As a result, pupil relationships

have improved and their understanding of multi-cultural issues is developing. In the vast majority of lessons pupils from different cultural groups appear to integrate well together and outside the classroom relationships are generally positive. Some pupils reported that although there continues to be relationship problems between for small minority of pupils these issues are not racially based. This is supported by the continued decline in the number of racial incidents recorded. Pupils sought to tell the inspection team about activities they had taken part in around the topics of racial and diversity awareness. These were clearly valued and pupils discussed them with enthusiasm. For example, Year 7 pupils welcomed the work undertaken in form time during their induction period on relationships, cultural differences and the high expectations of the school community. Through work in form groups, assemblies and in displays around school, there is clear evidence of a good improvement in the pupils' awareness of broader cultural issues and appreciation of differences. Senior leaders have led the staff in ensuring that diversity awareness and cohesion are included in a significant proportion of teaching schemes across subject areas and are monitoring the effectiveness of strategies through their learning walks programme and scrutiny of schemes of work and pupils' work. Formal review systems have been established with detailed reports reviewing both activity and impact, confirming the school's good progress on this issue.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Eradicate the poor behaviour of the significant minority of students who display inappropriate behaviour both in lessons and around school – satisfactory.
- Ensure students are fully prepared for life in a multicultural society – good.

The effectiveness of provision

The school has not sustained the progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning seen at the last two visits. Consequently, the school is not currently on track to meet targets set for the proportion of good or better teaching in either its own improvement plan or the plan of Education Bradford (EB). Despite declining, the proportion of inadequate or weakly satisfactory teaching remains too high and the contrast between the percentages of good or better teaching seen by the inspection team across the core subjects is a concern. Marking has not become consistently more effective in informing students about their progress and how to improve their work further. Where good or better teaching and learning were observed, relationships were positive and there was an atmosphere for work in the classroom. Expectations of what pupils' could achieve were high and lessons were well pitched to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers used questioning effectively, pace was brisk and varied activities were incorporated that resulted in good pupil engagement and their active participation in the learning. However, only half of the

lessons observed were of this quality and many of the positive features seen more widely at the time of the last monitoring inspection have not been consistently embedded into practice by many classroom teachers or subject leaders. Staff recognise and appreciate the contribution of senior leaders, the schools' Advanced Skills Teachers (AST), peer coaches and EB consultants to developing their teaching. However, the effectiveness of middle leaders in contributing to improvement in teaching and learning remains underdeveloped. Joint observations with senior leaders during the course of the inspection confirm their ability to accurately judge teaching quality but their overall view of the progress made in improving the quality of teaching is overgenerous.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that it is consistently good or better in order to remove the legacy of underachievement - inadequate

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders have continued to focus on addressing the areas for development. At Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment and progress has been improved and some modest improvements towards Key Stage 4 benchmarks for attainment and progress have also been achieved. Leaders have taken swift action to tackle the disappointing 2009 GCSE mathematics results by making good use of external expertise to strengthen the knowledge and skills of subject teachers. Monitoring of key aspects of the school's work is more embedded and regular reviews of the progress of delivering improvement plans are being undertaken. However, more robust evaluation is required to sharply identify weaknesses that still need to be addressed. Middle leaders have begun to develop their leadership skills as a result of an external professional development programme combined with follow up support in school. They are becoming more effective in holding teachers in their department to account through greater rigour in the use of pupil tracking data and the introduction of regular 'data conversations' to focus on the progress of individuals and groups. Learning walks and other quality assurance activities are helping them to have better knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in their respective subjects. However, middle leaders are not yet taking sufficient responsibility for improving the quality of teaching or marking. Overall, the pace of improvement by all leaders and managers needs to be accelerated in key areas such as pupils' achievement, attendance and teaching quality.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure leadership and management, at all levels, have the necessary capacity to improve the outcomes for students more rapidly – satisfactory.

External support

The planned amount of external support has been reduced for 2009/10 to reflect the increasing capacity of school leaders. The school improvement officer and the National Challenge Adviser have recognised the progress that the school has made but written reporting is not sufficiently explicit in identifying the significant improvement that is still required in a number of areas before the school will be judged to no longer require special measures. The IEB is still providing an appropriate degree of support and challenge, noting for example, that despite many improvements, the three year trend in outcomes at Key Stage 4 is not as convincing as they would like. The work of the partnership headteacher has become less front line but has nonetheless been effective in supporting further development in relation to improving pupils' behaviour and in particular their preparedness for life in a multicultural society.