

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

13 May 2010

Mr P Gittins
Headteacher
Newsome High School and Sports College
Castle Avenue
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD4 6JN

Dear Mr Gittins

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you, your staff, your students, the National Challenge Adviser, and the chair of governors gave when I inspected your school on 12 May 2010, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Since the last inspection the number on roll declined but this has been reversed and it is increasing again. The school has been refurbished and the learning environment improved. The school has gained the International School award and the Investors in People Bronze award.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 May 2008, the school was asked to raise standards at Key Stage 3; ensure the Key Stage 3 curriculum better meets the needs and interests of all learners; ensure teaching, including the use of behaviour management, is consistently good; and ensure that marking indicates clearly to students what they need to improve to reach the next level.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

satisfactory progress in making improvements

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Student's attainment at GCSE has remained low since the last inspection. However, in the current Year 11 there is reliable evidence to show that attainment is rising. As a consequence of curriculum changes made two years ago, the results already gained from new vocational courses show that the school is positioned to increase the proportion gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C in 2010. The early entry GCSE results for 2010 show that significantly more students than in the last two years have already gained at least grade C in mathematics. The results in English are weaker. These early results, and the improved teaching and support for Year 11 students, provide a stronger base to increase the proportion gaining five GCSEs grades A* to C including English and mathematics in 2010. In 2008 and 2009, students at Key Stage 4 underachieved. The school has reliable evidence from a local authority data analysis programme to show that the additional vocational qualifications already achieved are likely to bring the overall progress by Year 11 to a satisfactory level in 2010.

At Key Stage 3, between 2007 and 2009, there was a year-on-year improvement in the proportion of Year 9 students assessed at Levels 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. Until the school's Year 9 tests are completed, it is unclear whether there will be a further increase in 2010. Benchmarked Key Stage 3 data for 2009 indicate that progress in the core subjects improved to broadly satisfactory in Year 9.

These improvements have been brought about by changes to the curriculum and improvements to the culture for learning and teaching at the school. Attendance has improved from below average in 2008 to above average this year. A new uniform and an improved learning environment have contributed to the greater pride and confidence in the school. Expectations of what can be achieved are rising and more ambitious targets are being set.

The management of behaviour in the classrooms has improved significantly as a result of the introduction of clear rules and codes of behaviour and the increased use of rewards. More effective monitoring and analysis have enabled the school to identify and tackle poor behaviour earlier. Exclusions are low and on-call referrals during lessons have dropped significantly.

School records show that there has been some progress in improving the quality of teaching as result of better performance management, faculty reviews, coaching and training. In the best lessons during the monitoring visit, students engaged thoughtfully in discussion and activity and were motivated by well planned and resourced activities. In weaker lessons, activities were not sufficiently challenging or interesting and teachers tended to talk too much, with the result that attention drifted. Overall, there is not yet enough good teaching to secure consistently good progress by students. The use of assessment has improved. Students are now informed about their levels of achievement in all subjects and years. They know their targets and are able to talk about what they need to do to improve. Marking has improved and is usually constructive. At Key Stage 3, marking is not frequent enough in science and English. Students are not consulted sufficiently about their views on teaching, learning and assessment.

The school has developed more comprehensive data analysis systems with the result that the school is making more accurate interventions to combat underachievement, especially in English and mathematics. Timescales and targets for achieving specific increases in students' progress are not sufficiently explicit in the school improvement plan, or in the performance management of satisfactory teachers.

Changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum have strengthened the social, emotional aspects of learning. Students value the new opportunities to gain GCSE qualifications in Year 9. Plans for more fundamental changes to the curriculum in September 2010 are likely to increase the range of courses and qualifications.

In the last two years, the school did not meet its specialist school targets for sport and history. However, it is securely on track to meet these targets in 2010. The school's sporting links led to the school gaining the international schools award. The school gained two innovation awards for work to integrate disabled students and for linking the GCSE child development course with the crèche for a ladies fitness class.

Local authority consultants provide effective support for English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. The National Challenge Adviser has provided effective challenge for the school's self-evaluation of attainment, learning and progress.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector