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17 June 2010

Mark Rushby  
Headteacher  
Whitgift School  
Crosland Road  
Grimsby  
Lincolnshire  
DN37 9EH

Dear Mr Rushby

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Ann Taylor and I inspected your school on 16 June 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and students who met with us and shared their views. I am also grateful for the time given to the inspection by the chair of governors, staff from the local authority and the National Challenge Advisor.

Since the previous inspection the number of students on roll has decreased. This is because of demographic changes in the local area. Between 2008 and 2009 there were staff absences in both English and mathematics. The governors took the decision during 2009/2010 to enhance the staffing in both English and mathematics and this additional staffing is now in place. The school has recently restructured the senior leadership team. Whitgift is a national challenge school.

As a result of the inspection on 12–13 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- make better use of the assessment information in order to plan lessons more effectively for all groups of learners
- share more widely the identified good teaching that does exist in the school.

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

- inadequate progress in making improvements

and

- satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In 2009 a significantly higher proportion of students left Key Stage 4 with five A\* to C grades at GCSE than in 2008. However, the proportion who left with five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics fell significantly and was below the floor target for national challenge schools. The school's assessment data and the results from early entry examinations show that in 2010 the proportion of students leaving with five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics should rise significantly. However, much of this improvement in attainment is because of short term intervention strategies rather than long term sustainable improvements to teaching. The progress made by students has varied considerably over the past three years. In 2009 overall, students made significantly more progress than would be expected. However, in English they made considerably less progress than would be expected and in mathematics progress was in line with expectations.

Joint observations with two members of the senior leadership team during the inspection show that they make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching. Teaching is regularly monitored and reviewed. In the best lessons innovative strategies are used to engage and motivate the students. These combined with high expectations, good subject knowledge and a rapid pace ensure that the students make at least good progress. Excellent questioning and effective use of new technologies are also a strong feature of these lessons. Although good practice is shared more widely it is not having a positive impact on classroom practice across the whole school. There is still too much variability in the quality of teaching. In too many lessons assessment data are not used effectively to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the needs and interests of the students. This means that in the majority of lessons students' progress is limited and in some lessons students make inadequate progress.

Progress towards demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. School improvement planning, line management meetings, senior leadership team meetings and governors' meetings are focused on students' attainment. However, although attainment is improving this is not through improving teaching. Self-evaluation is accurate and perceptive. Senior leaders and managers, as well as governors, are all well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Line management meetings are now more rigorous. The recent restructuring of the senior leadership team has provided staff with clear direction and has clarified roles and responsibilities.

The local authority has provided significant support to the school. This has been focused on improving achievement in mathematics and English. The National Challenge Advisor has provided effective support and challenge to the senior

leadership team. The work of both the National Challenge Advisor and the local authority is appreciated by the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart  
Her Majesty's Inspector