

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5359
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

15 November 2013

Mr A Edmonds
Headteacher
Brannel School
Rectory Road
St Stephen
St Austell
Cornwall
PL26 7RN

Dear Mr Edmonds

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brannel School

Following my visit to your school on 15 November 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure your improvement plans have clear measurable milestones to check on the progress towards targets
- set achievement targets for students eligible for the pupil premium to ensure they make accelerated progress.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, teachers with responsibility for English and mathematics, a group of Year 11 students and members of the governing body. A telephone call was also made to a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and there were short visits to lessons.

Context

You have made changes to the roles and responsibilities of your senior leadership team. This has enabled them to have clearly defined areas that they are responsible for improving. There are also two additions to the senior leadership team who have been appointed for one year to add capacity and also to develop their leadership skills and experience. A new head of science has been appointed for January 2014 and he will also join the senior leadership team.

Main findings

You have made a very good start in tackling the areas identified for improvement at your recent inspection. Expectations have been raised with regards the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Senior leaders are implementing their improvement plans swiftly and staff are very clear on what is expected from them. As one teacher commented, 'there is more accountability now but we know what is expected of us now.' Examination outcomes in 2013 show significant improvement, particularly in mathematics.

The processes to manage staff performance have been developed. Each member of staff's performance is closely linked to the outcomes of students that they are responsible for. Also, in setting performance targets, staff are required to state the actions they will take to ensure students meet their targets. This process has enabled staff to think clearly about how they will bring about the raised expectations.

There is, rightly, a focus on improving the quality of teaching. Each teacher has been given a 'record of staff learning activities' booklet. This booklet states expectations on what teachers must do throughout the year to develop the quality of their teaching, for example 'observe three different teachers.' This has placed the emphasis on teachers taking responsibility for improving their own practice. Staff have received training sessions on aspects of teaching and senior leaders conduct regular, short visits to lessons to ensure expectations are being adhered to and that training is impacting positively.

The Year 7 curriculum has been altered to incorporate a thematic approach to developing students' literacy and numeracy skills. I observed several of these

sessions during the visit and students spoke very positively about this style of lesson and particularly the opportunities to work with each other in developing their learning.

Members of the governing body are providing strong support and challenge to you. They are very clear on the improvements that need to be made. The school's development plan identifies the key actions to bring about rapid improvement. There is a need, though, to ensure that there are measurable milestones to check on the progress toward targets. You also need to set achievement targets for students eligible for the pupil premium to ensure they make accelerated progress.

External support

The local authority have provided helpful support and funding particularly within mathematics. This support continues and the impact can be seen in the improved GCSE outcomes in 2013.

You have linked with several local primary schools to begin to share best practice. There is also a growing relationship with another secondary school to enable senior leaders to share their experiences and to identify elements of best practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
Her Majesty's Inspector