

CfBT Inspection Services T 0300 1231231
Suite 22 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
West Lancs Investment Centre www.ofsted.gov.uk
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Direct T 01695 566934
Direct F 01695 729320
gtunncliffe@cfbt.com
www.cfbt-inspections.com



4 February 2011

Ms C Ridgway
Headteacher
Collegiate High School Sports College
Blackpool Old Road
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY3 7LS

Dear Ms Ridgway,

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Collegiate High School Sports College

Thank you for the help which you and your deputy gave when I inspected your school on 3 February 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please forward my thanks to the staff, students and Chair of the Governing Body for their help during the visit.

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership of the school has changed with the appointments of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of mathematics. All three of these people started at the beginning of September 2010. In addition, there has been a high turnover of staff leaving the school along with a change to the structure and composition of the senior leadership team.

As a result of the inspection on 23-24 June 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

In 2010, the performance at the end of Key Stage 4 against all key attainment indicators, with the exception of the average points score, was significantly below the national average. There was also a marked gender difference between students attaining five or more grades at GCSE including English and mathematics; boys outperformed girls by ten percentage points.

Nevertheless, some positive messages emerged from the results in 2010. The gaps in attainment from 2009 narrowed against most indicators including: English, mathematics, science, five A* to C GCSE grades and five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. Indeed the gaps closed at a rate faster than those nationally. In the case of the latter two indicators the school exceeded its targets. Since the previous inspection the

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school has introduced a very effective and rigorous system for recording and tracking attainment data and students' performance. Students' progress is tracked by cohort, groupings and individually. This has enabled the school to gain a very clear picture of student progress and provide clear predictions for future performance. This has already been proven through the results from students taking GCSE English and mathematics examinations in November 2010. The confirmed results match closely to the school's predictions. Since summer 2010 students' attainment and progress have continued to improve. All the key performance indicators currently show higher performance than was the case at the same time in January 2010. Current projections also show that the school has made some good progress in closing the attainment gap between boys and girls in mathematics. The school has introduced several strategies aimed at improving the girls' attainment in mathematics including: the introduction of new schemes of work and the greater focus on independent learning. This, together with the good role model provided by the new head of mathematics, has had an impact on improving the performance of girls in this subject. Current projections show that the school is likely to meet or exceed its targets for English and mathematics in 2011.

The school has also targeted higher-ability students as a group where attainment needs to improve. Senior leaders have introduced a range of strategies aimed at addressing this concern. These include: greater tracking and monitoring of progress, the use of local sixth form students as mentors and additional after-school lessons taught by teachers from the partnered sixth form college. Early indications show that the percentage of likely A* to A grades at GCSE is higher than at the same time last year. Similarly there has been some positive progress in closing the gender attainment gap between the higher-ability students.

At the time of the previous inspection teaching and learning were inadequate. Based on lessons seen during the monitoring inspection the quality of teaching and learning has improved overall. In these lessons teaching was observed to be firmly satisfactory with some being good. Overall behaviour in the lessons observed was at least satisfactory and in the majority it was good or better. Senior leaders have worked hard to improve students' attitudes to learning and to remove the poor behaviour which existed across the school. Students and staff interviewed report a great improvement in students' behaviour since the arrival of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school no longer uses fixed-term exclusions as a sanction but uses an on-site exclusion unit for instances of disruption and poor behaviour. This improved behaviour is one factor which has contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning.

The senior leaders have prioritised the focus on improving teaching and learning across the school. They are dedicated to seeing all inadequate teaching eradicated and achieving a minimum level of good teaching across the school. There is a rigorous system in place to monitor the quality of learning in lessons by senior staff and middle leaders. All staff have been supported well through a regular teaching and learning training programme. This has been delivered at whole-school and subject level by senior staff and external providers. This training and support has contributed greatly to the improvements seen in teaching and learning and helped reduce the number of inadequate lessons, including in science. From

the lessons observed during this inspection it was evident that the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection have all been acted upon and are showing signs of diminishing. One notable improvement was the behaviour management by teachers in lessons. In the better lessons other improvements include: improved lesson planning which focussed on learning and ensured that activities were varied to meet the different needs of the learners. Equally, teachers' expectations were generally higher and teachers were using assessment more effectively to provide useful feedback to learners and inform lesson planning. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' use of questioning was superficial and students' responses lacked depth. Similarly, the pace of lessons was not brisk enough which in turn hindered the rates of progress. However, the progress of all groups of students is improving overall because the quality of teaching is also improving.

The school has worked successfully to increase rates of attendance. It has introduced many strategies to bring about this improvement, including a series of rewards for good attendance which the students welcome and value. There is evidence that these strategies are having some impact. Attendance rates are beginning to rise. Evidence seen during the inspection confirms that the students' current attendance overall is in line with national rates. Similarly, the attendance levels of those students who are persistently absent from school is improving but they remain high in comparison to national rates.

The strong strategic leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher has been a key driver in bringing about the many improvements and good progress achieved since the previous inspection. Several new strategies and systems have been introduced, all aimed at raising standards and bringing about whole-school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate; senior leaders and middle managers are monitoring and quality assuring the school's progress weekly. A rigorous performance management system is in place and staff are held to account on a weekly basis. The school has actively sought to increase its leadership capacity by involving more middle leaders in wider leadership roles and this has been successful in supporting the drive for further improvement. The school's record keeping in relation to safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

The school's specialism of sport is contributing well to the life of the school and local community. Sport is being linked effectively with achievement in mathematics and this has helped to raise the attainment of girls. Teaching is strong within the specialism and the good practice is used as a role model for other staff across the school.

The school receives a good level of support from local authority consultants and advisers. The local authority is rigorous in the way it monitors the school's progress through regular half termly review meetings. The requested amendments have been made to the authority's statement of action which now meets requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Sharples
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 23-24 June 2010

- Raise achievement, especially of higher ability students and in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that learning and progress in lessons accelerates by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching in science
 - increasing the amount of good teaching
 - improving the management of behaviour in lessons so that attitudes to learning improve
 - making effective use of assessment data in planning lessons
 - ensuring that teaching and the work set meet the full range of individual needs and
 - are suitably challenging for all students including higher ability students and those
 - with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve attendance by developing and implementing effective strategies that all staff pursue vigorously.