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Mr Brian Jordan
Headteacher
Bebington High Sports College
Higher Bebington Road
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CH63 2PS

Dear Mr Jordan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bebington High Sports College, Wirral

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 April 2014. 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:

- strengthen the school improvement plan to ensure those responsible for the effective monitoring and evaluation of actions are clearly identified
- build on the initiatives already in place to improve teaching and learning and to develop the role of middle leaders
- ensure that new staff appointed to the school are sufficiently well supported so that they are able to help the school move to 'good'.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, students, a member of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school development plan and other documentation such as the school's self-evaluation document were evaluated.

Context

The school has undergone significant staffing changes since the last inspection. Ten teaching staff have left the school and twenty have been appointed, eleven of whom are newly qualified teachers. The school has also appointed two teaching assistants, an office administrator, and a sports and games organiser.

Main findings

Despite some disappointing results you and your senior team display a good capacity to affect positive changes in the school. You understand what needs to be done to improve outcomes and have taken bold actions to improve the capacity of the teacher workforce. Senior leaders have prioritised actions well and are utilising external support to good effect. The school development plan matches well the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. However, the plan needs to make clear, not only who is leading on the actions, but also who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating whether the success criteria are being met.

Unvalidated data for the summer 2014 examination results show the percentage of students attaining 5 A*-C grades was 37% as compared to 41% in 2013. The percentage of Year 11 students making expected levels of progress in mathematics and English has risen but it is still lower than national levels. Results in the sixth form demonstrate an improving trend in students' average point scores, and in attendance and retention figures, although students perform better in some subjects than others.

Since the last inspection, the local authority has supported the school in a range of initiatives to help senior and middle leaders develop their practice. Middle leaders now have a better understanding of how to assess students' progress and are more aware of their responsibility to ensure good teaching and learning in their departments. Teachers have also benefitted from training that has targeted issues such as marking, feedback and improving students' writing skills.

The students I spoke with were very appreciative of the improvements to teaching and learning since the last inspection. They say that marking is now more frequent with lots of advice on how to improve. Students enjoy peer assessment activities and say it helps them to learn. They were keen to tell me how much better their mathematics lessons were with 'more interactive teaching' and that the many new teachers were 'a breath of fresh air'. They like their teachers having higher expectations of them than in the past, with more homework and a greater focus on their writing skills and presentation. Although the work was now harder the students did not think the school was any less caring with one student commenting that, 'the teachers do not just see us as students – they see us as 'theirs' and will always go

that extra mile for us'. All of the students spoken with agreed that there was still some low level disruption in classes but that teachers were getting better at dealing with it and in the active and interesting lessons it didn't happen. The students thought that the school was a safe environment and that hurtful comments would not be tolerated by staff or students.

The Governing Body have benefitted from working with a national lead for governance and are now much better able to hold you and other leaders to account.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has brokered support from local schools to help with teaching and learning in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, and has welcomed the support provided by the Local Authority. This has included a consultant for English; subject reviews of mathematics and English with subject reviews of science and the sixth form planned for the near future; reviews of literacy, marking and feedback across the school; funding of national middle leadership training; and plans to broker support from national subject leads from local good and outstanding schools. You have attended Ofsted's 'Getting to Good' seminar and will be attending Ofsted's 'Through the lens of inspection' seminar and follow up activities with colleagues from local schools. I will keep you informed of any future events that you may find helpful.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector