

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0845 123 6001  
**Direct F** 0845 123 6002  
**Direct email:**  
sarah.cartlidge@tribalgroup.com



4 March 2011

Mr J Lawrence  
The Headteacher  
Sir James Smith's Community School  
Dark Lane  
Camelford  
Cornwall  
PL32 9UJ

Dear Mr Lawrence

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Sir James Smith's Community School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Raye Allison-Smith and I inspected your school on 3 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would be grateful if you would also pass on my thanks to the students, staff and members of the governing body who met with us.

As a result of the inspection on 25 and 26 November 2009, 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 we are of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The senior leadership team continues to provide a strong direction for improvement that is clearly focused on raising students' attainment. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in lessons are robust. Leaders have focused sharply on areas of weakness and there has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Systems to track the progress of students have been improved, particularly for those students in Years 10 and 11. Those who are underperforming are quickly identified and provided with effective additional support, for example through 'academic reviews'. Students comment favourably about the academic progress sheets which have been introduced. In most lessons, students are keen to learn and confident about what they need to do to achieve. Improvements made since the previous inspection are having a positive impact on students' progress and attainment.



Following a dip in GCSE results in 2009, the 2010 results show that the school is back on track to resume a trend of improvement. The proportions of students achieving five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics improved markedly in 2010 to be in line with the national average. There was a similar improvement in the percentage of students in 2010 achieving five or more good GCSE grades. Overall attainment remains broadly average. The progress made by students between Years 7 and 11 is improving. The most recent Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 contextual value added figure shows that girls performed better than boys. Some boys did not attain the results they were capable of in their GCSE examinations. Improved progress seen during the inspection shows that this issue is being addressed and that the boys are now making better progress. Much improved results in mathematics in 2010 reflect particularly strong teaching in this department.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching by leaders indicate that learning in at least two thirds of lessons is good or better. Lessons observed during the inspection confirmed this, including a small minority of lessons promoting outstanding progress. In a very small minority of lessons students' progress is not good enough because prior learning is not used well enough and work given uses uninspiring worksheets. However, in most lessons teachers make good use of the information they have about students to match tasks to the needs of individuals and groups of students. Particularly good questioning and discussion were observed for example in history, mathematics and modern foreign languages. On the few occasions when this was weaker, it was mainly because the students were not given sufficient time to think and respond in depth. Students are typically provided with good quality feedback on their work during lessons. In several lessons, for example mathematics, good use of self-assessment sheets and marking is helping the students to gain a deeper understanding of their progress and targets for improvement.

The school's review of the curriculum in both Key Stages 3 and 4 has led to a number of improvements, notably the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) back into the 'core' at Key Stage 4, and new ICT and physical education (PE) options. The use of external support to improve music provision is yet to have sufficient impact. Increased time across Key Stage 3 to strengthen geography and history and the planned use of teaching to model good practice are appropriate steps taken to increase the influence of the school's specialist status. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing and applying students' skills in literacy, speaking and listening, numeracy and ICT. Good use has been made of external support to develop a whole-school strategy to improve literacy across the curriculum. However, this is still at an early stage of development.

Senior leaders and members of the governing body have a determination to eradicate the remaining inconsistencies in provision. Improved systems and procedures are enabling leaders to strengthen the accountability of individual departments for the progress made by students. Actions taken, particularly to improve the quality of teaching and learning and provide better support and

guidance for students, have addressed the most important issues raised at the last inspection.

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

Peter Clifton  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in 25 and 26 November 2009**

- Undertake an urgent review of the curriculum in both Key Stages 3 and 4 to ensure that all students are provided with an appropriate range of options, and are well prepared for them.
- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching to at least two thirds of lessons by the end of this school year by ensuring that:
  - all teachers make full use of the information they have about students to match their teaching to the needs of individuals and groups of students
  - teaching engages all students through better use of directed questioning, students' responses to develop teaching points and discussion
  - all students are provided with frequent high quality feedback on their work.
- Take immediate steps to ensure that all teachers fully understand their role in developing and applying students' skills in literacy, speaking and listening, numeracy and ICT. Use the existing good practice within the school to show other teachers ways of working.
- Ensure that the systems and procedures that are in place for monitoring students' progress, and for intervening where necessary, are fully understood and implemented in all areas of the school before the end of this school year.
- Ensure that senior leaders rigorously monitor the effectiveness of all developments and actions they implement.