

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



03 December 2008

Mr D Eyre
Headteacher
Brighton Hill Community College
Brighton Way
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG22 4HS

Dear Mr Eyre

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Planning for change: the impact of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 02 December 2008 to look at work in planning for and implementing the new Key Stage 3 curriculum with particular reference to Year 7.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the planning for and implementation of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards on entry to the present Year 7 were around the national average. At this early stage of the implementation of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum, it is not possible to make a firm judgement on its impact on achievement, but the progress of the students observed in lessons was good.

- Exercise books confirmed the good progress observed in lessons.

- Achievement in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2008 was satisfactory.
- The students make good progress in developing independent learning skills in lessons.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution to the students' personal development and well-being. Students report that they enjoy school and speak enthusiastically about the many opportunities to try new things and join clubs.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in Year 7 is good.

- Learning objectives are clear, precise and linked to varied tasks and activities in lessons.
- Good questioning techniques probe the students' understanding and encourage them to reflect on their learning.
- There is a good balance between providing support for students when they need it and challenging them to work independently.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Individual lessons are clearly linked to the students' previous learning.
- In some subjects marking clearly shows students what they have achieved and how they could improve their work. However, this is not consistent across the school.
- The students report that in some subjects they are repeating work done in Year 6 and in these instances they do not feel as challenged to improve their standards as in other lessons.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the new curriculum in Year 7 is satisfactory.

- The new curriculum builds on the strengths of the previous structure well. Arrangements for completing the programmes of study by the end of Year 8 in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are well established and work well.
- Subject leaders in most areas have responded well to reducing the content in schemes of work, allowing more time for reflection and active learning in lessons.
- The students respond positively to the new arrangements for teaching personal development and religious education through the Preparation for Life course.
- Subjects are at different stages of introducing personal learning and thinking skills and functional skills into schemes of work. There is some good practice in these areas, but this is inconsistent across the school.
- Although the non-statutory Dimensions feature in subjects, there is no whole school mapping of where these are covered.

Leadership and management of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum

The leadership and management of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum are satisfactory.

- The priority for the school this year has been to develop the 14 to 19 curriculum rather than the new curriculum for Key Stage 3.
- The school has made some use of external training for the new Key Stage 3 curriculum, but this has not been attended by all subject leaders. Those who did attend found it useful and practical.
- Senior leaders have ensured that subject leaders know what the requirements are within their own subjects, but there has been no whole staff presentation on the aims of the new curriculum across subjects. Consequently, subjects have tended to work in isolation and not all staff are fully aware of how particular subjects contribute to the whole curriculum.
- There is currently no overview of how cross-curricular elements of the curriculum which underpin and enrich subjects, such as personal learning and thinking skills, functional skills and the non-statutory Dimensions, are being delivered across the school. Consequently the school does not as yet know whether some are being given undue prominence or whether some are not being sufficiently developed.
- Specialist status in sport and modern foreign languages is making a satisfactory contribution to the development of the new curriculum. Proposals for cross-curricular work linked to the specialist subjects are well conceived and provide a good opportunity for developing the new curriculum.

Inclusion

The impact of the curriculum on inclusion is good.

- The curriculum is inclusive and allows access by all students.
- All groups of students were seen to be making good progress in the lessons observed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing whole-school strategies to map the delivery of personal learning and thinking skills, functional skills and the non-statutory Dimensions coherently across the school
- ensuring that schemes of work in Year 7 and the style of teaching and learning consistently build on the students' experience in Year 6 and promote achievement from the start of Year 7.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the curriculum in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector