



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 0117 315 0430  
Direct email: rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com

11 November 2011

Mr Chris Tomlinson  
The Executive Headteacher  
The Eltham Foundation School  
1 Middle Park Avenue  
Eltham  
London  
SE9 5EQ

Dear Mr Tomlinson

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Eltham Foundation School**

Following my visit with Anne Wellham HMI and Steven Smith, Additional Inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 November 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Greenwich.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010**

- Secure better achievement across subjects, and especially in the core subjects.
- Eliminate the number of lessons that are inadequate or just satisfactory so that teaching consistently engages students in their learning, enables students to make better progress and minimises the time wasted through persistent low-level disruption by:
  - providing appropriate training to ensure that all staff are accurate in their assessments of students' work against national standards
  - using secure assessment information to plan learning activities that support individual learning needs well
  - developing teachers' skills in the use of strategies to check that learning is taking place throughout the lesson
  - providing greater challenge and pace to accelerate students' progress
  - ensuring that agreed behaviour management systems are applied consistently well throughout the school.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels, including governors, rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the school so they understand and take actions necessary to increase the rate of improvement by:
  - monitoring and evaluating practice at all levels based on regular, accurate and robust assessments that lead to focused, precise and effective interventions to raise achievement
  - ensuring the governing body has the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to regularly challenge the performance of the school.
- Improve attendance and ensure students arrive punctually to lessons.

## **Special measures: monitoring of The Eltham Foundation School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, including lesson observations of all year groups, and scrutinised documentation. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders, members of staff, groups of students and representatives of the governing body.

#### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection, there has been a significant turnover of teaching staff, including changes to middle leadership. A new head of mathematics has been appointed and will take up post in January 2012. Science is jointly managed currently by two experienced subject leaders; a single subject leader will be appointed for April 2012. The school continues to work in partnership with Harris Academy Chafford Hundred. Consultation is underway on a proposal that The Eltham Foundation School converts to Harris academy status in September 2012.

#### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

Achievement is improving. Since the last monitoring visit there has been rapid rise in the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE C grades or higher, to above the national average. The same measure, but including English and mathematics, is also improving. It remains below the national average, but exceeded targets set by the school and the local authority. Improvements in English are particularly strong because they are founded on consistently good teaching and use of assessment in a stable and well-led department. Improvement in mathematics and science has been slower because of staffing turbulence and because newly-established teachers are not yet having sufficient impact on achievement. The proportion of students attaining two or more GCSEs in science was the same as in 2010 and remains too low, especially for girls, whose results overall lagged behind boys' in 2011. Increased success at GCSE is improving the confidence and motivation of students, who apply themselves to their learning with more commitment and conviction in lessons. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is accelerating as a result. In an English lesson, for example, careful planning enabled students to complete and assess an extended writing task using detailed GCSE criteria as a guide. They produced high-quality writing in a short space of time. The school has rightly identified that progress is slower in younger year groups and is focusing its efforts there. The impact of this is beginning to show in end of Year 9 levels, which are higher than in previous years. Again, however, progress in science, where there is the greatest legacy of underachievement, is still too slow.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- secure better achievement across subjects, and especially in the core subjects – good.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Improvements in behaviour that were evident at the last visit have been sustained and built upon, such that most behaviour in lessons is good and only lapses when teaching is weaker. Students see the school now as a place where there is respect for teachers and for peers. They describe behaviour prior to the arrival of the current headteachers as 'chaotic' and say that in the school now this would be unimaginable. They feel safe in school, expressing pride in themselves and their achievements. They are not intimidated by their challenging targets because they feel so much better supported to achieve them.

Attendance continues to improve. Students and parents have a clearer understanding of strategies to promote and sustain good attendance. They appreciate the rewards associated with high attendance and the systems in place to help them catch up with any work missed through absence. There has been a reduction in the rate of persistent absence, although this remains high. Action has been taken to improve the quality of external support in pursuing persistent absentees and gaining family support for full attendance. Current attendance analysis can identify overall gains and point to variations between year groups. However, it is not yet used to identify the full range of group trends, such as by ethnicity, in order to target actions for improvement more precisely.

Systems to improve punctuality, which were in place at the last visit, continue to be consistently and effectively enforced. Students have a greater role in refining and improving school policy, such as sanctions for lateness. They express a mature understanding of the value of developing good habits of attendance and punctuality as training for future employment. Very few are now habitually late to school. Punctuality to lessons has also improved; inspectors saw no evidence of lateness.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve attendance and ensure students arrive punctually to lessons – good.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

A rigorous programme of monitoring and lesson observation, supported by high quality professional development, is leading to improvements in teaching and learning. As a result, teachers are developing an accurate understanding of national standards and examination criteria and using these more effectively to help students reach or exceed ambitious targets. Improvements in behaviour and attitudes mean that teachers are increasingly successful in engaging students in their learning; low-level disruption is rare. They use a wider variety of methods and activities to generate enthusiasm and interest. In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge of individual learning needs to target activities so that everyone makes progress. They target questions to develop understanding and probe thinking. They allow for

reflection and repeatedly check to ensure that learning is secure by the end of the lesson. Management of time is brisk but no one is left behind.

This is not yet a consistent picture, however. Too much satisfactory and some inadequate teaching persists because teachers' understanding of individual learning needs lacks depth and only partially informs their practice. Regular whole-school assessment provides teachers with accurate information on students' progress, but its use to plan and adapt teaching is too variable. For example, teachers can identify which students have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, but their capacity to use this information to inform planning is under developed. Sometimes the impact of a well-planned lesson is diminished because students are confused as to its purpose, or activities move too quickly for them to grasp key concepts.

Students are keen to discuss their learning, but sometimes struggle to explain concepts coherently. The school has rightly identified the development of basic literacy skills as a major priority and the key to better achievement. New leadership of this area is addressing the need for all teachers and teaching assistants to have more sophisticated understanding of additional learning needs, although this is in its early stages. Plans for the school to develop a communication specialism in 2012 are appropriate and timely.

More consistent and meaningful marking is supporting learning. Some very good examples of constructive and developmental feedback and guidance, for example in English, are making a positive contribution to progress. Students are very appreciative of this and particularly enjoy developing a dialogue with their teachers, such as in some science books, and working to improve their work as a result.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- eliminate the number of lessons that are inadequate or just satisfactory so that teaching consistently engages students in their learning, enables students to make better progress and minimises the time wasted through persistent low-level disruption – satisfactory.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The headteachers and senior leaders are unrelenting in their pursuit of high standards of learning and achievement. The 'Gaining Ground' programme to support professional development is now fully established. It is used effectively to generate highly-detailed and robust evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Coaching is now established and its impact is visible in the best lessons. Considerable staff turnover since the last inspection visit has not de-stabilised these processes because new staff are joining an established culture of reflective practice and energetic improvement. Some satisfactory and inadequate teaching stems from inexperience rather than lack of skill. The school is aware of this and taking rapid action to eradicate weaknesses.

Leaders at all levels now accept and understand their accountability for rapid improvement. Evaluation of departmental performance is more rigorous and consistent. Heads of department have a clearer understanding of how to monitor their subject areas and evaluate success. As a result, their improvement planning is more detailed, focused and effective. Improvements in organisation and accountability provide structure for new staff, and are helping to maintain continuity and impetus for improvement. Senior leaders acknowledge the critical role this will play in establishing and developing effective leadership and capacity to improve in mathematics and science.

Governors are increasingly well equipped to support and challenge the school. Training from senior leaders and external partners has enhanced their understanding of how to evaluate teaching and learning and how to interpret achievement data. Through their developing subject link roles they are not only more able to offer support to heads of department but also to question and challenge performance from a position of knowledge. They are better placed to hold the school to account, although are still reliant on senior leaders to establish strategic priorities for development.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that leaders at all levels, including governors, rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the school so they understand and take actions necessary to increase the rate of improvement – good.

### **External support**

The school continues to make judicious use of external support provided by the local authority and by specialist consultants. The partnership with Chafford Hundred remains the most influential aspect of this work, providing a rich seam of teaching and leadership expertise which adds capacity and stability to programmes of improvement.