



You said, we've acted

An update on the actions we've taken following our recent Ofsted inspection

Our Ofsted inspection in November 2016 recognised that standards and progress at Bedale High School have shown sustained improvement over the last two years. It identified many strengths in the school including:

- the leadership of our headteacher, Mrs Rees.
- teaching in English, science, french, textiles and PE.
- the commitment of governors and their increasing challenge and expertise.
- the behaviour of most students and their commitment to the school.
- effective provision for those with special needs, enabling them to make strong progress.

Students at our school make better than nationally expected progress over their five years with us placing the school in the top third of secondary schools in the country. In recent years virtually every student has gone on to study at college, gained an apprenticeship or got a job, a record that compares well with non-selective schools anywhere in the country. We are proud of our record.

Nevertheless, inspectors concluded that there is more to do before teaching is consistently good in all lessons, that a minority of students' behaviour in lessons and around school is not good enough and that teaching and progress in mathematics needs to improve. We also think that we need to improve our communication with parents about the work of the school and this posting on our website is one way in which we are doing this.

At the meeting for parents following the inspection we explained that we are already implementing a detailed plan that is designed to make things better quickly. You can see a brief summary of our plan by clicking on this link www.bedalehighschool.org.uk/Parents/Letters . We promised to respond to the many questions raised by parents at the meeting and below are answers to your questions. We hope that they will give you some reassurance and will welcome your feedback. If you have comments or concerns that are not covered by the responses below please contact the school by email or phone and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Gerry Price
Chair of Governors
10 January 2017

What you said	What we've done so far
Mathematics	
There is a need for an intensive catch up programme so that students achieve well.	We have appointed an additional teacher to enable smaller classes and more rapid progress. There is also a programme of after-school revision classes for Year 11. Monday foundation with Mr Still and Tuesday higher with Mr Moulding. Mr Moulding is leading on this.
In maths, there is too much dependence on 'mymaths' as homework - not enough homework is returned and marked.	We will ensure an appropriate mix of homework with timely and helpful feedback to students. Mr Moulding is leading on this.
Can we have a further meeting for Year 11 parents about students' progress in maths in February? Followed with monthly feedback.	Yes, good idea. We will write to Year 11 parents/carers shortly to give a date in February and decide then whether further meetings would be helpful.
What is the difference between maths assessments - from last year to this year?	GCSEs have become much harder with some material being moved from A-level to GCSE. The detail of this was only available to schools in the latter part of last school year. Now that we have sample questions from the exam board, students are being prepared accordingly. Mr Moulding has oversight of exam preparation and is ensuring all classes are prepared appropriately.
Other subjects	
Progress 8 for English and maths - who is preparing the students for the exams? What will happen for other subjects next year?	Teachers are using the sample questions received from the exam boards. All subjects have time and access to the exam boards to build their knowledge for the new exams. This is a national change and Bedale High School is responding to the changes with support from the local authority and other local schools sharing their practice. Planning in other subjects for when the all the new GCSE courses are examined is well advanced.
Are the spellings in English challenging?	This is monitored by the English department. If you feel that your child is under-challenged please contact Mr Barber .
In science, students have not had feedback from PAEs for Year 10 and Year 11?	All students have been given their results. The papers have been retained to be used as part of detailed lessons on exam technique later on. Students wishing to look at their papers and discuss them with their teacher have been offered the opportunity to do so by Miss McGuinness and her team.
Scrap general studies.	General studies includes many essential parts of the curriculum, e.g. careers education and statutory religious education so we do not intend to scrap it. However, we are moving to a Citizenship course for 2017, which we think will better meet students' needs.
Behaviour	
Greater rewards in school for achievement.	We recognise that the vast majority of our students deserve praise for their positive attitudes. We will ensure that rewards are used consistently to reflect this and that this is shared with parents and the wider community. This is led by Ms Haydon.
How do you promote the achievements of Key Stage 3 (Y7-9).	Student of the half term in each subject has been actioned to celebrate the achievements of students. This is led by Ms Haydon.
Some students prevent others from learning because of poor behaviour in class. They show a lack of respect for staff.	This is unacceptable and will be dealt with firmly. From now on we will make contact with parents whenever behaviour is unacceptable in school. We expect parents to support the school whole-heartedly if this issue is raised with them. This is led by Ms Haydon.
Students find some teachers are unapproachable.	Recent staff training encourages greater positivity from staff in discussion. Our expectations of staff and students have been reinforced so that all are clear about how highly Bedale High School values positive communication and relationships in our school community and learning.

Some teachers do not know their students well.	The vast majority of teachers at Bedale High do know their students well. Inevitably new teachers will need a while to get to know their classes but everybody at the school is striving to establish productive relations with those they teach.
Will students go to the anti-bullying team?	Our students have always taken a very prominent role in anti-bullying initiatives, preparing and delivering assemblies, counselling and mentoring students as examples. We believe that students will want to be involved in their school, making it an even better place to learn. Ms Haydon will lead on this.
What about having a monitor system for those travelling on school buses?	Good idea. We will investigate how this can be achieved. Ms Haydon will lead on this.
Is restorative justice used? There is little evidence from parents' perspective.	This is developing practice and our action plan reinforces that it is very much part of the pastoral initiative. This is led by Ms Haydon and will be monitored by governors.
The use of sanctions and implementation of behaviour policy are inconsistent. Are children sanctioned for trivial reasons?	Students are rewarded and sanctioned in line with an agreed pyramid. Our students tell us that we are, in the majority of cases, consistent in our use of the pyramid. Our expectations of staff and students have been reinforced so that all are clear about what is acceptable at Bedale High School. It would be unacceptable for students to be sanctioned for trivial reasons. Ms R Haydon is leading on this.
<u>Students' progress</u>	
How is progress monitored? Current reporting hard to follow, could it be personalised?	Progress is monitored through the marking and feedback of students' work, through informal assessment in class and through formal assessment, such as tests or assessed pieces. We record progress at three points in years 7-9 and four points in years 10-11 and communicate these to parents. Parents have requested greater personalisation to the reporting process which Mr Iddison and his team will consider. Pupil progress monitoring is led by Mr Iddison.
How will you support lower level children that are falling behind without stigmatizing them?	We track the progress of students in each year group three times a year. Any under-performance is raised with staff and actions taken by the classroom teachers to ensure that students make greater progress. It is the responsibility of each classroom teacher to ensure their students make good progress. Lesson planning always takes account of involving pupils at all levels in a positive and collaborative way. This is checked on by heads of department through their monitoring process and overseen by the senior team.
Parents' evening - perhaps form tutor meetings for pastoral issues can be included.	Good idea. We will investigate how this can be achieved. Mrs Rees will lead on this.
<u>Communication</u>	
Dissatisfaction with response to queries raised by parents in respect of: reports grading, feedback after an issue has been raised, feedback on telephone calls, use of planners comments from staff.	Effective communication is crucial in all aspects of school life and we are working to improve this wherever possible. A working group is reviewing ALL communication across the school. Expectations on communication will be shared with all staff, including timelines for responses and we will monitor parents' satisfaction with this. Mrs Rees is leading on this.
Email contact routes require clarification unclear how the pastoral system works, who is the first contact for parents? Is it Heads of House?	Routes for communication clarified for parents, including the pastoral system. This will be led by Mrs Rees.
Reception closing at 4:00pm causes difficulty for working parents.	We cannot afford to staff reception later in the day. We will always do our best to respond to any message left on our answerphone as early as possible the following day.

Ensure written notice for detentions.	Our system does send letters and texts with regard to after school detentions.
Will you hold a year 6 parents' evening to explain the situation.	Year 6 parents' evening will be held in the first half of spring term.
When will the action plan be available for parents to view?	A summary of the action plan is published on the school website. You can access it by clicking on this link www.bedalehighschool.org.uk/Parents/Letters . The detailed action plan is a working document that will be reviewed and updated regularly over the coming two terms. We will update parents regularly about progress with the plan.
Staffing, management, etc	
How are standards monitored by the senior team.	There is a senior leader monitoring programme that includes learning walks, drop-ins, student voice and checked through the use of external expertise. These are also scrutinised through regular governor visits. There is a weekly marking report for those staff who require it.
Is there consistency within teams and across the school.	Not sufficiently so. There is excellent practice in many areas and we are working hard to spread this throughout the school. Practice is checked across departments and is part of the Wednesday collaborative planning. This is led by Mrs Rees.
Are you in denial as governors and teachers in terms of the issues within school?	No. Ofsted acknowledges that the school has progressed in the last two years with sustained higher standards. Clearly there is more to do. We are addressing immediately the issues raised with strong plans and support. The support from parents/carers is important for our future success.
What will be different under Mrs Rees' leadership to ensure that we are not in the same position again?	The inspection report confirms that Mrs Rees has worked successfully, raising expectations and levels of accountability. The action plan is clear and has been consulted on beyond the school. It is being implemented with a sense of urgency to ensure that we are not in the same position. Mrs Rees has the support of the board of governors, staff and parents to make the changes we need to see in the school. The local authority is providing us with substantial additional support and expertise to ensure that the weaknesses identified by Ofsted are dealt with quickly and successfully.
Will you buy in support from outstanding schools to develop Bedale practice.	Yes, this is being funded by the local authority. A deputy from a successful school, St John Fisher School, Harrogate, has been seconded to help us implement our plan. There has been additional training for staff on behaviour management. We have recruited an additional maths teacher beyond our normal complement. A North Yorkshire Schools Adviser will monitor progress with the action plan and report to governors. We anticipate further external support in the coming weeks.
Why did a number of staff leave last year?	Our staff turnover is around the norm for the area. Several teachers gained promotion from Bedale to positions that we did not have vacancies for in our school, e.g. sixth form experience. As our school reduces in numbers due to the falling student population locally we also require fewer teachers. Exit interviews are offered and held by the governors to elicit why staff move, and the experience they have had at Bedale High School.
Why is recruitment an issue in Bedale?	Recruitment is a national issue. It is a particular problem in mathematics for many North Yorkshire schools. It. We have joined the teaching school alliance in Harrogate to build our maths team through participating in school based teacher training. We have offered financial incentives to attract and retain staff. However, we cannot compete with the rewards offered by industry and have lost two key staff in recent years as a result. We have used the advice from the specialist recruitment advisor from the local authority with good success in attracting high quality teachers to the vacancies we have.
How is staff morale supported after Ofsted?	Naturally staff are disappointed with the judgement that the school requires improvement. It is frustrating that some of our best staff were not seen teaching at all and that no teacher was observed for the whole of a lesson.

	Nevertheless the role of each member of staff in responding to the issues raised at Ofsted is clear and there is a collective determination to get things right for our students and ensure that the school is judged good when we are inspected in 18 months or so.
Is becoming an academy a likelihood?	The board of governors has no plans for the school to become an academy as it believes the priority is to focus on improving the school so that it is good in all aspects. If we do not secure a good judgement at the next Ofsted 2018 then the government will force the school to become an academy and it would probably be run by an academy trust nominated by the Regional Schools Commissioner. The local authority would cease to offer support and all governors, including parent governors would be removed. We do not believe that this is in the best interests of our students or the wider community and would urge all parents to support the school in implementing the action plan.
When will the school next be inspected?	Ofsted can inspect the school again at any time. The school is only notified of an inspection the day before. Typically a school requiring improvement is inspected within two years. Before that there will be a monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, probably in April, to check that the school is taking appropriate action to tackle the issues raised in the report.