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4 March 2011

Mr Mark Burgess
Acting Headteacher
Egerton High School
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Lancashire
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Dear Mr Burgess

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Egerton High School

Following my visit to your school on Thursday 3 March, 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 June 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 – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services for Trafford.

Yours sincerely

Liz Godman
Additional inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010

- Secure the longer-term arrangements for the senior management team and distribute leadership roles among staff.
- Improve the students' range and quality of achievement principally through improving the management of their behaviour and the better use of the school's facilities.
- Strengthen governance by increasing the governing body's involvement in school development and in the life of the school.
- Improve the tracking and assessment of students' learning and their progress in managing their own behaviour.

Special measures: monitoring of Egerton High School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 3 March 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

The revised staffing structure, under consultation at the last monitoring inspection, is now being implemented. A number of teaching and support staff were absent during this inspection. Some areas, both indoors and outside, have been refurbished.

Students' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The pace of learning is increasing. Some inappropriate behaviour remains, but this interrupts lessons less frequently. Students sustain attention for longer and respond more readily to requests from staff. For example, when they begin to do something inappropriate, a quick reminder usually re-engages them. Progress is improving faster in lessons which allow active participation. For example, in football, students' skills in dribbling and passing developed considerably and they increased their efforts as the lesson progressed. In English, students explored the use of persuasive language in advertisements and remained involved. This is because the activities varied and students' contribution was expected.

Students' science and mathematics books show wider content coverage. In mathematics, work is increasingly matched to the GCSE specification and students are developing examination skills. However, the degree of challenge across all subjects remains limited. As a result, some students' progress is not improving sufficiently. Overall, underachievement persists and attainment remains too low.

Other relevant student outcomes

Students show greater self-control and are less distracted by others' inappropriate behaviour. The aggressive or noisy behaviour of one student triggers fewer incidents involving others. However, some still struggle to remain in the classroom when they hear shouting or banging doors in the corridor. More lessons start promptly as students arrive better prepared to work. The use of inappropriate language persists, but is less obtrusive and students more readily moderate what they are saying. Some students show a better understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others and a greater ability to cooperate in pairs or small groups. This indicates their growing moral and social development. Assaults

on staff and damage to premises and equipment are rarer, resulting in reduced use of exclusions. Overall, adults and students feel that the school is becoming safer.

Attendance remains too low for many students. However, the school's sharper analysis enables senior staff to identify absence patterns. Although there remains much to do, greater involvement of the education welfare service is helping parents and students recognise the importance of regular school attendance. This has increased some students' attendance.

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

- Improve the students' range and quality of achievement principally through improving the management of their behaviour and the better use of the school's facilities – satisfactory

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving and work is better matched to the overall needs of the class. Less inappropriate behaviour and a related decrease in the time required for managing incidents and resolving conflicts, help lessons progress more smoothly. In some, although the content remains mundane, students are working harder as they become motivated by growing success, for example, in working through problems in a mathematics text book. However, lesson planning does not always cater sufficiently well for the full range of attainment. Input from support staff still varies. Some make a greater contribution by leading lessons or supporting students in completing work, but others remain less involved.

The lack of the use of assessment to increase students' progress persists as a significant weakness. Although staff show greater understanding of the levels at which students are working, this is not consistently shared with them. Similarly, opportunities continue to be missed for students to evaluate their own or others' work, for example, in relation to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grade criteria. Consequently, students lack understanding of their learning and remain insufficiently challenged in extending their progress.

Improvements to the fabric of the school give students a greater sense that learning is important. Further work is planned to improve facilities to support emotional well-being. Although there is an improvement in the use of space for physical education, other rooms remain underused, for example, for design and technology.

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

- Improve the tracking and assessment of students' learning and their progress in managing their own behaviour – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have a growing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clearer view of future priorities. Staff are increasingly supported to manage students, resulting in improved behaviour. Senior leaders recognise a next step as leading improvements in teaching and the use of assessment.

The school's plans for improvement are more focused, with fewer activities, clearer criteria for success and a simpler approach to evaluation. This gives a sharper picture of more secure foundations for the future. The revised staffing structure is designed to give increased stability to staffing and finance over time but, at present, causes some distraction from raising achievement.

The governing body is giving better support and challenge. The new governors with specific expertise and the stronger committee structure have helped governors and senior leaders tackle premises, finance and staffing issues. Governors visit more frequently during the school day, but do not record these visits. Consequently, information arising cannot be used to strengthen the governing body's impact.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Secure the longer-term arrangements for the senior management team and distribute leadership roles among staff – satisfactory
- Strengthen governance by increasing the governing body's involvement in school development and in the life of the school – satisfactory

External support

The local authority provides effective support and is aiding improvement. The chief adviser (secondary) has been particularly instrumental in drawing upon a wide variety of resources and expertise, for example from governor services, to help improve the premises, finances and staffing. The local leader in education, the School Improvement Partner and the local authority's advisers have helped the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher in addressing priorities.