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11 March 2011

Ms C Abbott
Acting executive headteacher
The Market Weighton School
Spring Road
Market Weighton
YO43 3JF

Dear Ms Abbott,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Market Weighton School

Following my visit with John Barnes, additional inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 March 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 6 and 7 October 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

Newly Qualified Teachers may not 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 the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 6 and 7 October 2010.

- Establish a culture to sustain school improvement by:
 - raising the expectations of all staff
 - raising the aspirations of students.

- Improve the quality of teaching and in particular, the use of assessment by:
 - using the outcomes of lesson observations to inform development needs
 - 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
 - making better use of the pockets of effective practice that already exist to improve the proportion of good and better teaching.

- Develop the capacity of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that leaders and managers receive support to develop the skills necessary to be effective in their roles
 - establishing clear priorities for school improvement
 - producing a plan of action so that everybody understands what is to be done by when and by whom
 - using the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to inform the next steps for improving provision and outcomes
 - holding to account rigorously those responsible for the implementation and impact of agreed actions
 - providing curriculum leaders with opportunities to experience effective practice elsewhere.

- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that students have the necessary skills and abilities from the outset to succeed on academic programmes
 - tracking students' progress rigorously and taking steps to effectively counter underachievement
 - ensuring that leadership of the sixth form has the necessary capacity to make the improvements required
 - working with the local authority and partners to ensure that organisational arrangements facilitate participation across consortium-wide provision.

Special measures: monitoring of The Market Weighton School

Report from the first monitoring inspection from 9 to 10 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including a large sample of students' workbooks. They met with the acting executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff, students and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also spoke with students informally during break times and in lessons.

Context

Since January 2011 an executive headteacher, from South Hunsley School, has been leading the school in the absence of the substantive headteacher. During the autumn term 2010 she worked to support the school as a National Leader in Education. An assistant headteacher from Hunsley shares co-responsibility with the school's substantive deputy headteacher for day-to-day management.

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

Since 2008 students' overall achievement has been inadequate. Girls' progress in 2010 was particularly weak, especially for those of lower ability. Less than two-thirds of the student cohort made expected progress in English and mathematics. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades in their GCSE examinations fell sharply in 2009 and, although levels recovered in 2010, overall results remain below average. When English and mathematics are included in this measure there was a much more significant fall in 2009. Despite a rise in 2010, the proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, remains below that attained two years ago.

The manner in which the school collects and collates assessment evidence in the main school continues to strengthen. Assessment information is becoming more reliable but inconsistencies in its accuracy, and use, between departments remain. The school's internal monitoring is projecting an improvement in GCSE outcomes in 2011 compared to previous years.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

In most lessons, students are attentive and engage productively in discussions and activities. They are keen to learn and improve. Most partake in paired and small group work, although a significant number are reluctant to join in whole-class discussions or share their views without being prompted by the teacher. The large majority of students behave satisfactorily, although their behaviour can often be good. A small number of students were however boisterous in corridor areas during break times. In the small number of inadequate

lessons, a minority of students became disengaged from the learning because the aims of the lessons were unclear and they were unsure about what was expected of them. Those students who met with inspectors consider school to be a safe place and have confidence in staff to support them should difficulties arise. Attendance remains above average with most students arriving on time to lessons.

The effectiveness of provision

Inspectors observed 21 lessons. The large majority were judged to be satisfactory; a minority were good while a few were inadequate.

Since the inspection, there has been an improvement in the way most teachers use the school's revised lesson planning format. Learning objectives are routinely shared with students and some teachers outline the rationale for lessons and where they fit within a set of sequential learning stages. In the best lessons, well-researched and interesting content is reflected in teachers' good subject knowledge. Resources are well matched to support students' learning. This does much to generate students' enthusiasm and results in high levels of participation and application. These lessons build successfully on students' prior learning because teachers use their knowledge of students' capabilities very effectively when planning activities. Students feel challenged by teachers' high expectations. Lessons have good pace and teachers are rigorous in setting deadlines for the completion of activities. The effective use of key learning milestones is successfully promoting students' capacity to self-evaluate, providing them with a clear sense of future priorities.

While these factors combine to drive learning forward and are providing students with a heightened sense of their achievements and capabilities, they are not commonplace. However, they do show the emerging impact of the leaders' strategy of achieving a step-change in teachers' understanding of effective learning and teaching.

In too many lessons, the pace of learning is pedestrian. Students' comply with teachers' instructions rather than displaying enthusiasm for their work. Although teachers often set the context for the lesson well, this initial impetus dissipates when all students are provided with the same worksheet-based task. These tasks are mostly mundane and do little to capture students' interest or address their needs. They are de-motivating. Teachers' understanding of their role beyond the introduction to the lesson is not well considered. Few teachers target or plan their time to support the learning of specific groups or individuals throughout the lesson. Teachers tend to be reactive to students' questioning with less-confident students receiving insufficient help to access tasks they find difficult. Some students are left isolated throughout the lesson and achieve little. More-able students, who could achieve much more, are not sufficiently challenged. Few teachers adjust activities as lessons proceed because they do not recognise when the pace of learning slows or when students are experiencing difficulties or their progress is stalling.

The marking of students' work has improved but remains inconsistent. There are very good examples of how evaluative marking accurately assesses students' learning and guides them

towards improvement. These examples provide all teachers with clear examples from which to model their own practice. However, there are relatively few occasions where feedback results in students following through with targeted work in their books.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and in particular, the use of assessment – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inspection evidence confirms that actions undertaken during the spring term show a much greater resolve by the school's leaders to tackle the school's weaknesses. Significantly, this aligns with the governing body's greater assertiveness; it is increasingly challenging about the pace of improvement. In addition, the 'Future's Group' is promoting well-considered discussions about the school's remit and structure.

Strategic decisions are now being driven forward by the school's senior staff with a higher degree of coordination, urgency and commitment. Revised action planning cycles are providing a more-secure and better-understood basis for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are increasingly robust and outcomes are feeding through productively into teachers' professional development and performance management. Roles and responsibilities are becoming more clearly defined. The accountability of middle leaders is increasingly pronounced. Line management meetings are now in place to support and hold middle leaders to account. There is greater consistency and rigour in the way middle leaders evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning, although further work to secure confidence in these judgements is on-going. Effective support from South Hunsley is adding significant additional expertise and extending opportunities for staff to observe good practice. It is particularly effective in contributing to improving teaching and learning.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- establish a culture to sustain school improvement – satisfactory
- develop the capacity of leadership and management at all levels – satisfactory

Sixth form

Over half the students in the sixth form missed their targets in 2010 and there was a wide variation in subject performance. Results in some AS and A-level courses were disappointingly low, with students' overall achievement being inadequate. While interventions to support underachieving students are now in place, there is scant evidence about what impact these actions are having on students' progress or how they are being monitored or followed through. Expectations of students' achievement in the sixth form for 2011 are below those of the previous year. There is an unacceptably wide gap between students' minimum expected targets and those which are aspirational. This will do little to

inspire students and may have a demotivating effect. The manner in which the work done by post-16 students is tracked is improving, but target-setting procedures remain weak and evidence does not demonstrate that staff have a secure understanding of students' capabilities.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the effectiveness of the sixth form – inadequate

External support

The school receives good support from the local authority. Actions identified in the local authority statement of action, which meets requirements, are effective in supporting the school. The move to appoint a National Leader in Education has proved effective and has offered the opportunity to secure the strategic leadership of the school since the absence of the school's substantive headteacher. The local authority review in January 2011 was a key milestone in refocusing the school's efforts on its substantive weaknesses and has underpinned the impetus and drive to improve. There is effective support for middle leaders through the local authority's consultant team and the well-respected input from staff at South Hunsley.