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28 February 2011

Mr J Steel  
Executive Headteacher  
Mr D Needham  
Acting Headteacher  
Hanson School  
Sutton Avenue  
Swain House Road  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD2 1JP

Dear Mr Steel and Mr Needham,

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hanson School**

Following my visit with Chris Griffin, Pankaj Gulab and Mike McLachlan, additional inspectors, to your school on 24 and 25 March 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 first 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 – 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 Strategic Director for Services to Children and Young People for Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Briggs  
Lead Inspector

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, but especially in mathematics and English by:
  - improving the quality of teaching to ensure that more lessons are at least good
  - recognising the different needs of students, particularly boys, and tailoring lessons to meet these needs more effectively
  - providing all students with sufficient challenge and support in lessons to achieve their best
  - improving the consistency and accuracy of assessment so that students are clear about what they need to do to improve
  - improving behaviour, attendance and punctuality to lessons.
  
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, take responsibility and are accountable for:
  - developing and sharing a vision for the school's improvement and sustaining the momentum to achieve this
  - monitoring the school's work rigorously and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses accurately to provide a secure basis for coherent improvement planning
  - developing and delivering a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum at Key Stage 3 that provides a full entitlement for students and meets statutory requirements, including those for religious education
  - ensuring that learning programmes are planned to progressively develop skills, acquire knowledge and promote understanding
  - developing the skills of all leaders so that they can accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and take the necessary action to tackle under-performance and share good practice.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Hanson School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection from 24 to 25 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, including 45 lessons. They scrutinised documents and met with a group of students, the executive headteacher, acting headteacher, associate headteacher and key members of staff. Meetings were also held with the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body and two representatives from Education Bradford. A telephone discussion was undertaken with the School Improvement Partner.

#### **Context**

Since the previous inspection the headteacher has resigned. A new leadership structure of executive headteacher, acting headteacher and associate headteacher has been created. The initial executive headteacher has since resigned and has been replaced. The leadership team has been extended to include seven additional staff. The school is scheduled to close at the end of the academic year and reopen as an academy in September 2011.

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

The improved tracking and assessment system, supported by outcomes in early entry in GCSE English and through modular results in mathematics, indicate that the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes in 2011 is likely to rise. Other threshold indicators also show an expected improvement on last year. There is an expectation that teachers and leaders at all levels become more skilled in analysing data in order to take action to reduce gaps in achievement. The data will also be used to hold all staff to greater account for the impact they are having on outcomes for students.

Inspection evidence indicates that students' achievement, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is beginning to improve at both Key Stages 3 and 4. However, their progress overall remains slow because there is not enough teaching that is good or better to make up for the legacy of low attainment and poor achievement. In some lessons there are examples of more-accelerated rates of progress, linked to the improving quality of teaching. However, pockets of inadequate progress remain and overall attainment remains too low.

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, but especially in mathematics and English – satisfactory

## **Other relevant student outcomes**

Students and staff say that the reaffirmation of established procedures is improving behaviour and in some ways it is. Low-level disruption is less frequent because more lessons engage students in their learning, resulting in increased concentration and less misbehaviour. Fixed-term exclusions have risen expectedly as a result of the increased rigour. Behaviour around the school remains a concern. Too much inappropriate language and over-boisterous behaviour occur in corridors. Some students smoke in the school grounds despite staff being close by and others pay little heed to requests to act appropriately. The management of behaviour remains inconsistent, with too many staff allowing breaches of school rules regarding uniform and conduct to go unchecked.

Despite some encouraging signs due to the work of the 'Boost' team, attendance is not improving swiftly enough, particularly for those students who are persistently absent. Punctuality is improving in some respects but too many students still arrive very late for school.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

There has been an increase in the number of lessons judged good or better, but the proportion of inadequate teaching remains too high. Consequently, teaching remains inconsistent. Relationships in most classrooms are strong. Teachers' planning identifies more consistently the range of activities to be undertaken by the students in relation to the learning objective. However, it does not focus sharply enough on what exactly students are to learn in relation to their individual targets. Consequently, teaching is not always successful in moving students to the next levels in their learning. More teachers are focusing activities to help boys make greater progress but this is not yet the norm. There are growing pockets of outstanding teaching that result in excellent learning. In these lessons the pace of learning is brisk, activities are well matched to all students and teachers use questioning effectively to encourage students to think more deeply and make rapid progress. In the weaker lessons these strengths are absent. Too often teachers give students work that is too easy for them. As a result, the more able students are not challenged enough and they underachieve. Weaker lessons are dominated by too much teacher input, leaving insufficient time for students to practise and consolidate skills being taught. Although the way teachers question students is improving, not all target questions to individuals, which results in the most vocal students dominating responses. Teachers have a growing understanding of the importance of using assessment information to increase student progress. However, marking of written work remains inconsistent and lacking that specific advice which would help students focus on exactly where to concentrate their efforts.

The curriculum has been redesigned in response to the criticisms of the last inspection. It is driven by a focus on ensuring it matches the needs of all learners better. In Years 7 and 8 it now meets statutory requirements but not so in Year 9. History and geography are taught as discrete subjects and schemes of work for several subjects have been focused more on ensuring all students make better progress in lessons.

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

The acting headteacher has ensured that staff accept the need to bring about improvements and share a clear vision of raising the quality of education for all students. Action planning has appropriate targets and realistic timescales. Leaders know that there is still some considerable way to go but have prioritised sensibly so that key areas of focus are beginning to show improvement. They understand that the root cause of the underachievement lies with the quality of teaching and the rigour of a range of management structures. As a result of improving monitoring systems, intervention strategies have been implemented, training provided and underperformance robustly tackled. Leaders are using the skills of talented staff already in the school to better effect. Groups of teachers have been identified for extra support and coaching and this is already paying dividends, particularly in raising the performance of teachers who regularly deliver barely satisfactory lessons.

The school is using the expertise within the specialism to help improve teaching. Observations show that collaboration between science and modern foreign languages is having a marked impact on the quality of language teaching.

The leadership team has been strengthened. Lines of accountability are clearer with staff welcoming the 'professional challenge' and accepting the new role they have in raising attainment. Nevertheless, some weaknesses remain in key roles within the leadership team. The quality of middle leaders remains variable. Although some improvement is evident, heads of faculties do not formally monitor their staff rigorously enough to ensure they have a finger on the pulse of their departments. Management of the sixth form has a lack of formal accountability and clarity of role. The head of sixth form is not part of the leadership team and consequently communication suffers. There is confusion amongst governors, staff and students about who is in charge of the school. Governance is tighter, more focused and is beginning to hold the school to account. One governor stated: 'We were too trusting, but we now check everything'. Challenging questions are being asked and governors are much more involved in the day-to-day work of the school. For example, a representative attends leadership team meetings. Despite the pressures of the new building programme and the transition towards academy status, leaders are maintaining an appropriate focus on removing the school from special measures.

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

- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, take responsibility and are accountable – satisfactory

## **External support**

After the inspection in November 2010, Education Bradford submitted a statement of action outlining how it would improve the school. This plan was judged by Ofsted to fulfil requirements. The school is appreciative of the good-quality, targeted support provided through consultants, the associate headteacher and the School Improvement Partner. The

impact of this carefully planned support can be seen in the improvements to teaching, aspects of leadership and the work undertaken to secure academy status.