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06 Apr 2011

Mr G Garghan
Headteacher
Howden School and Technology College
Derwent Road
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Dear Mr Garghan

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Howden School and Technology College

Following my visit with Mrs Joan Davis to your school on 6 and 7 April 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 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 – good

Progress since 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 East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

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

- Ensure that all students, regardless of their academic ability, make at least satisfactory progress, by:
 - improving the use of assessment so that all students are provided with activities which are challenging and meet their needs and interests
 - focusing on eradicating low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons through developing teaching so that all is at least satisfactory and the majority is good.
- Develop leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that monitoring results in actions which are clear and have a positive impact in sustaining improved outcomes for students.
- Improve the robustness of safeguarding policies, procedures and systems so that:
 - monitoring is rigorous and effective
 - actions taken are followed through and their impact is recorded
 - all students feel safe.

Special measures: monitoring of Howden School and Technology College

Report from the second monitoring inspection from 6 April 2011 to 7 April 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, other staff, students and representatives of the governing body.

Context

The contract for the executive headteacher and the acting headteacher has been extended to August 2012. This provides better stability and continuity during the school's transition.

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

Last September, the new school leaders introduced a six-weekly system for monitoring student progress. This now provides a well-documented record of progress against targets in each year group. Rates of progress are increasing. The target for the current Year 11 is to make as much progress as similar students in similar schools. The data indicate that students are currently just below this target. The results of the early entry GCSE in English show that the current Year 11 have already gained the same proportion of A* to C grades as in 2010, and that results in English are on track to improve in 2011. Predictions made on the basis of GCSE module results and mock examinations in mathematics indicate that attainment is also on track to rise in 2011. School assessments indicate that Year 11 students are continuing to underachieve in a few subject areas. Overall, the school is on track to increase the proportion of students that gain five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. The students in Year 7 who have received additional one-to-one support in literacy and numeracy are making improved progress.

As a result of improved teaching, students are enjoying their learning more and they are making better progress in lessons. Students are motivated by the increased direction provided by regular information about the progress they are making against their targets. In an increasing proportion of lessons, good use of assessment contributes directly to good learning. Students value the consistent use of lesson objectives which enables them to understand more clearly what they are expected to achieve in lessons. Information about what they need to do to improve is provided more regularly and more accurately which provides a stronger focus for their learning of specific skills and knowledge.

There has been significant reduction in the amount of low-level disruption by pupils as a result of the introduction of a new behaviour management system in January 2010. Students have responded well to teachers' use of the graded system of consequences and to the improved rewards for good behaviour. As a result, students are able to get on with

their work much better. In most lessons, they are now free from the distraction of teachers dealing with low-level disruption, although it happens occasionally.

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

- Ensure that all students, regardless of their academic ability, make at least satisfactory progress - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Attendance this school year is similar to the attendance for last year which was above average. Rates of fixed-term exclusion are very significantly lower compared with the same period last year. The number of occasions when students have been sent out of lessons due to disruptive behaviour has also been greatly reduced. More positive attitudes to learning have been achieved as a result of improved teaching and the new system of managing behaviour through consequences and rewards.

Students appreciate the efforts that teachers have made in making lessons more interesting. According to a student survey conducted during March 2011, a very large majority of students say that the school has improved since September 2010 and that they feel safer in school. Students are pleased with the introduction of the facility to email staff, should they be bullied. They also commented on the far swifter response rate from their teachers when problems arise. Students particularly appreciate the support of the well-trained and active peer mentors. Students have an effective voice through the school senate and welcome the fact that senior staff consider their views when developing new initiatives, such as the behaviour policy.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Over 200 lesson observations carried out by the senior leadership team, local authority consultants and staff from the partner school, have furnished the school with clear evidence of strengths and weaknesses. The proportion of inadequate teaching has been substantially reduced and there is less satisfactory teaching. The proportion of good teaching has increased. A few outstanding lessons were also observed during the monitoring inspection. However, there is still too much satisfactory teaching, including in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Common systems of planning, objective setting and use of assessment criteria have improved the overall level of teaching. Lesson planning takes greater account of the varying levels of student attainment, and assessment criteria are used more frequently to match activities to students' needs. In the better lessons, teachers use assessment effectively to check that students have understood the work. Students are also encouraged to assess the work of others, and thereby develop an insight into how to improve their own. In weaker lessons, too much talk from the teacher and a lack of detailed planning leads to low level distraction and chatter.

The 'Team Howden' concept is used effectively to communicate the stronger care, guidance and support for students and the commitment to value every member of the school. The peer mentoring system, the new behaviour management system, and the school senate have successfully increased the sense of order and security and the levels of student involvement. Assemblies are used effectively to convey the school's mission to improve outcomes for students. The new behaviour management procedures have been established across the school and have had a clear impact on the improved attitudes and behaviour of students. The system is still relatively new and the senior team recognises that there are a few inconsistencies in the way staff apply the behaviour policy.

Since its inception in September 2010, the Learning Zone has provided highly effective support for a few students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It has reduced the level of behaviour incidents by individual students and has increased their enjoyment, attendance and sense of security. Excellent relationships with parents and carers contribute to students' improved behaviour and attendance. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the contribution the Learning Zone has made to increasing their child's achievement at school.

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

- Improve the robustness of safeguarding policies, procedures and systems - good

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The executive headteacher, the acting headteacher and the senior leadership team have worked quickly and skilfully to improve the climate of the school and how it works. They have introduced more effective whole-school systems for teaching and behaviour. They have established clear common goals and have successfully built a higher level of trust and confidence among staff and students. Leaders are approachable and staff and students feel that they are listened to well and that any concerns are taken seriously. Leaders have provided strong encouragement for staff and at the same time they have been firm and clear about where change is needed. Systems of planning, monitoring and evaluation are more rigorous and are bringing about more rapid change.

Members of the governing body are increasingly well informed and engaged in the monitoring and evaluation of the school through the setting up of a committee for this purpose. New and existing governors take a keen interest in the progress being made and engage well with the senior leaders. Regular reports on the progress of the school are given to students, parents and governors. This engages all stakeholders in the process of improvement.

Leaders have implemented a regular and comprehensive system for monitoring the performance of staff. Effective action has been taken to challenge and support individuals delivering inadequate lessons. The focus on tackling individuals delivering satisfactory lessons is not as sharp. The programme of continuing professional development has contributed to the stronger consistency across the school in the planning of lessons, the use of lesson objectives and the use of assessment. Newly qualified teachers, who were

appointed before the last inspection and took up post in September 2010, have made good progress and are well supported.

Leaders have introduced a frequent and thorough system for monitoring the progress of students. Information about progress is more accessible and better understood by staff, governors and students. This has contributed to improved motivation and progress. Systems of monitoring and evaluating each department are rigorous and frequent. The leadership analyses performance in detail and draws on outside expertise to make judgements about the quality of teaching, and leadership and management. These evaluations reveal the continuing variation in performance between departments and the inconsistency in the quality of leadership and management at subject leader level. The role of middle leaders is underdeveloped and the school has plans in place for them to take on a greater role in self-evaluation. Clear action plans for the school and individual departments identify specific actions and timescales to bring about improvement and the impact of these actions is reviewed accurately and systematically.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Develop leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that monitoring results in actions which are clear and have a positive impact in sustaining improved outcomes for students -good

External support

The partner secondary school continues to provide the services of the executive headteacher and acting headteacher. Other staff at the partner school have also made a valuable contribution to the evaluation of departments, support for middle leaders and in sharing good practice. The local authority has provided good support for improving the quality of teaching and learning and the use of data through the work of subject consultants and advisers. The new School Improvement Partner is providing useful challenge and support.