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19 September 2011

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

Dear Mr Needham,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hanson School

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 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 third 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 - inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - inadequate

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 Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Briggs
Lead Inspector



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 third monitoring inspection on 16 September 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work including a range of lessons delivered by newly qualified teachers and their mentors, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, associate headteacher, a group of newly qualified teachers, two representatives from the local authority and two representatives from the academy sponsor.

Context

Hanson School was expecting to become an academy on 1 September 2011 but this has been deferred by the Department for Education. Consequently, the local authority remains the appropriate body until the academy sponsor takes over at a date yet to be confirmed. A significant number of staff changes have taken place since the last monitoring inspection. The head of mathematics has been replaced and 11 newly qualified teachers have been appointed. Most lessons take place in the new building but mathematics and science lessons remain in the original building. Parts of the original building are being refurbished and there is much building work going on around the school.

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

The school's analysis of the most recent GCSE and equivalent examination results show that students continue to underachieve significantly, particularly in mathematics. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics dropped substantially and was well below the school's predicted outcomes. The results for mathematics were exceptionally low at 37%, a drop of seven percentage points. Results for English showed some improvement on last year but remain significantly low. The gap between the performance of boys and girls gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics widened even further, with boys doing approximately 10% worse than girls. Similarly, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities did particularly badly. Students eligible for free school meals did considerably worse than any other group with only 7% attaining the key measure. A major concern is that 12 students left school without any qualifications whatsoever. Within this overall bleak picture there are some positive outcomes for students. For example, the overall proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C GCSE passes increased to an all time high for the school. Results for post-sixteen students also improved on previous years and remain a relative strength of the school.

It is the progression students make in their learning whilst at Hanson School that is the greatest cause for concern. In mathematics, only 34% of students achieved the expected

three levels of progress and 16% made no progress whatsoever, with some actually regressing in their learning. Progress in English is more positive but still much too low, with only approximately half of the students making the expected progress.

At the last monitoring inspection, senior leaders were very confident of the accuracy of their predicted targets but this has proved to be unfounded. Many targets set by individual subject leaders were way-off the mark and had not been robustly challenged or verified by senior leaders. Consequently, the variation in targets set and actual outcomes is worryingly wide. For example, the BTEC science course, a specialist subject and one that is renowned for high proportions of passes, predicted that 30% of students would attain passes at grades A* to C but the actual result was 99%. Conversely the targets predicted for Art were 43% higher than the actual results. It is clear that the systems used to check targets are fundamentally flawed and senior staff did not check them robustly enough.

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

- raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, but especially in mathematics and English – inadequate.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

This aspect was not a focus of the inspection.

The effectiveness of provision

Nine part-lessons were observed during a learning walk to evaluate the quality of teaching by newly qualified teachers and their mentors. As the focus for these observations was very specific, no judgements were made on the overall quality of teaching and learning seen. However, based on the poor 2011 results, the quality of teaching appears to have declined since the school was placed in special measures. Leaders are aware that a number of teachers are able to deliver good and even outstanding lessons when being observed, but over time their teaching has been less impressive when directly measured against its impact on students' learning. This has resulted in observation data unrepresentative of teaching over time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have not been rigorous enough in ascertaining the reliability of targets set by subject leaders. Management responsibilities, although clearer, have not ensured that staff are held sufficiently to account for the achievement of students. Weaknesses in the management of mathematics have been allowed to go unchecked for too long and this is evidenced by the exceptionally poor results. Assessment procedures, believed in wholeheartedly by senior staff, have proved to be flawed. The drop in results and the wide gaps in predictions against outcomes came as a surprise to the headteacher and senior staff. The

headteacher was unable to provide any convincing explanation about the lack of accuracy of the predictions.

In addition to the poor academic outcomes for students, governors and senior managers have failed in their statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ascertain the suitability of new staff to work with children. Safeguarding procedures fail to meet statutory requirements because a number of newly appointed staff have been working with children without suitable evidence of their appropriateness to do so. Leaders have not put in place procedures to ensure that the staff awaiting results of police checks are supervised by another adult. Consequently, this inspection has identified serious concerns regarding the procedures for ensuring the safety of students.

At the last monitoring inspection inspectors expressed their concern regarding the appointment of newly qualified teachers to a school that was failing to provide an acceptable quality of education. The school had not been given consent by the lead inspector to appoint these teachers but as it was expecting to gain academy status on the 1 September 2011 the appointments were made. Despite further instructions not to appoint newly qualified teachers, more were appointed after the last monitoring inspection. The total of 11 newly qualified teachers is extremely high and, whilst induction plans are detailed, the school does not have the infrastructure to ensure that these new teachers receive sufficient access to high quality mentoring and enough opportunities to observe high quality teaching. The local authority and the academy sponsor are offering appropriate support to ensure that this deficiency is limited.

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

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

External support

The local authority is providing appropriate interim support to the school as it deals with the delay to academy status. They have taken on responsibility for ensuring the newly qualified teachers experience all the induction packages offered by the local authority. In addition, the Schools Partnership Trust has offered support from their teaching and learning experts and the opportunity for the newly qualified teachers to visit an outstanding school. The support of the local authority and the academy sponsor for the induction of the newly qualified teachers is invaluable and without this commitment the school would not be able to sustain an induction programme of sufficient quality.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure as a matter of urgency that appropriate checks are made on all staff as to their suitability to work with children and ensuring, where checks have not been made, that the adults are not left unsupervised.
- Ensure that newly qualified teachers are given sufficient opportunities to observe good and outstanding teaching and learning from a variety of external sources.
- Ensure that senior staff have an accurate understanding of the progress students make.