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11 January 2012

Ms G Broom

Headteacher

Hameldon Community College

Coal Clough Lane

Burnley

Lancashire

BB11 5BT

Dear Ms Broom

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Hameldon Community College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority adviser and those students who took the time to speak with me.

The number of students on roll has reduced from 430 at the time of the previous inspection to 342. There has been some turbulence in staffing, including the early retirement of the head of mathematics.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 June 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that, at this time, the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The school has had significant success in raising attainment so that most students were successful in gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent in 2011. There was also an increase in the numbers of students achieving five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. The proportion of students making expected progress from their starting points was similar to the national figure in English, but considerably lower in mathematics. The school's reliable data indicate that attainment is set to rise again in 2012. Students' attendance levels have improved and the proportion of students who are persistently absent from school has reduced.

School leaders and teachers are aware of the need to accelerate progress and much work has been done to ensure that good progress is an expectation within lessons. Observations confirm that students' progress in lessons is becoming more consistent. Achievement is rising because teaching is improving. The school has been successful in largely eradicating inadequate teaching and the majority of lessons are now good or better. An extensive programme of professional development, including coaching and sharing of good practice, has helped teachers to provide tasks that are more suitably matched to students' abilities. Better teaching and effective additional support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are enabling them to access the curriculum more effectively, particularly by improving their reading skills. Students report that lessons are becoming more engaging and that they are involved in reviewing their learning on a regular basis. Most lessons follow a clear structure that enables students to know what they are expected to achieve and judge how well they are doing.

There remains a core of teaching that is no better than satisfactory and this is not enabling students to accelerate their learning. Teachers consistently identify students' needs but do not always plan how those needs will be met. The more able students and those who are reticent in answering questions are not always sufficiently challenged. Teachers have worked hard to improve their questioning skills and ask open questions. However, the use of questions to promote extended answers is not embedded and some students lack confidence in offering more than very brief answers. There is evidence of thoughtful, detailed and regular marking, but this is not consistently the case and some teachers pay insufficient attention to developing students' literacy skills through their feedback.

There is an increased focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills, in lessons across the curriculum and in tutorial time. Teachers are conscious of the need to extend students' vocabulary but strategies for achieving this are at an early stage of development. The school recognises that the programme of numeracy teaching provided by form tutors requires some modification to meet students' different needs.

The school has made effective use of its specialist status as a science, business and enterprise college to provide opportunities for students to engage in varied projects, often with a strong community dimension. Students are actively involved in developing the potential of the new school site, for instance, in growing vegetables and rearing chickens. These activities are having a beneficial effect on the self-esteem of students and on the school environment.

The statement of action prepared by the local authority meets requirements. The support provided by the local authority consultants and advisers has been effective. Consultants have worked in partnership with school leaders to improve students' behaviour and attendance as well as the quality of teaching. The local authority's monitoring of the school's performance is wide ranging and insightful. The school's active membership of the Burnley Learning Partnership has supported its work in

raising standards and enabled the school to share its own good practice to benefit others.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching in order to raise attainment and accelerate students' progress, by:
 - developing teachers' use of assessment to support learning so that tasks provided in lessons are always closely matched to the ability of individual students, ensuring consistently high levels of challenge and support as appropriate to their needs
 - ensuring that in all lessons, students are more actively involved in reviewing their own learning against their challenging targets
 - ensuring that students have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning and share their thoughts and ideas with others
 - increasing the opportunities for students to practise and develop the application of their skills in literacy and numeracy in all areas of the curriculum.