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22 March 2012

Mr T Megahy
Associate Principal
Hanson School
Sutton Avenue
Swain House Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 1JP

Dear Mr Megahy

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hanson School

Following my visit with Katherine Halifax and Alan Parkinson, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 20 and 21 March 2012, 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 fourth 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 – 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 Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Briggs
Lead Inspector

January 2012



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 fourth monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 March 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work including 38 part lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the associate principal, associate vice principal and other key staff. In addition, discussions were held with groups of students, the vice Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives from the local authority.

Inspectors also scrutinised the school's records for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff and checked that the school is meeting statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in September 2011, there have been significant changes in staffing. The acting headteacher went on sick leave directly after the last monitoring inspection. In consultation with the local authority, the incoming sponsor has appointed an associate principal and associate vice principal to lead the school until a substantive principal has been appointed. In addition, several teachers have left the school and some new appointments have been made. The proportion of lessons taught by supply teachers has increased.

Hanson School was expecting to become an academy on 1 September 2011 but this continues to be deferred by the Department for Education. Consequently, the local authority remains the appropriate authority until the academy sponsor takes over at a date to be confirmed. Most lessons continue to take place in the new building. Additional refurbishment is nearing completion and there continues to be much building work going on around the school.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school has assessment data that show that attainment is likely to rise in 2012. Leaders are rightly confident that the tracking of students' attainment is more robust and accurate than in the past. They are predicting an increase of the proportion of students gaining five A* to C including English and mathematics to 40%. There is also an expected increase in the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C in English and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics. The most recent data show that students with special educational needs are also on track to attain better results in 2012. A higher proportion of early entry results also corroborates that attainment is likely to rise. However, the overall proportion of students making the expected progress in English and mathematics is predicted to be significantly low, as it has been in previous years. Consequently, although attainment is rising and likely to meet government floor standards, the pattern of significant underachievement continues.

Inspection evidence indicates that students' achievement and the progress they make in lessons, although improving, is still far from good enough. Too many teachers still do not provide all students with enough challenge in lessons. This leads to work that is sometimes so easy it results in some more-able students making little or no progress.

Students have a better understanding of how to improve their work. This is helping them to focus on the key aspects requiring improvement. The progress records of three middle ability Key Stage 4 students, chosen at random, were evaluated in some detail. The evidence shows that there are still some inaccuracies in the assessment information collected and presented about students' progress over time in the school.

While the school has understandably concentrated its efforts on improving attainment and progress for all groups of Year 11 students, there remain concerns about the progress of younger students and the consistency with which teachers use some of the tracking data to plan lessons. Students' standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain a significant barrier to their overall achievement. Nevertheless, the school has raised attainment and improved some aspects of students' achievement over the last few months.

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 – satisfactory

The quality of teaching

Although improving in some areas, the quality of teaching remains a serious concern across the school, especially in mathematics. There is still a lack of consistency across the school and within some subjects. The key features of the best lessons are the very points missing from the weakest. Students are aware of the inconsistency and say that the quality of their learning 'depends on which teacher you get'. This inconsistency continues to result in significant underachievement for many students. The strongest teaching occurs in the sixth form and in Key Stage 4. This is where the focus on gaining examination results is sharpest. Although the number of teachers who regularly deliver inadequate lessons has reduced, the proportion of good or outstanding teaching remains too low. Only one outstanding lesson was observed during the inspection. Some lessons are skewed to getting students through examinations, rather than ensuring that their learning is exciting, engaging and motivating. Some lesson planning focuses more on what teachers will do rather than how they will promote effective learning. Consequently, there is not enough teaching that ensures students make good progress. In too many lessons students are all given exactly the same work to do irrespective of their ability. Teachers still do not cater for the different learning needs of students and are not tailoring enough lessons to build on students' prior attainment. Some teachers cap the amount of progress students make in a lesson because learning objectives are not ambitious enough. Teachers do not always take enough opportunities to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge. Similarly, too few teachers promote students' literacy and mathematics skills across all subjects.

The deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants are variable. At one end of the spectrum there is highly successful support for visual and hearing impaired students, and at the other, some teaching assistants have little or no impact on students' learning. The quality of teachers' marking remains variable. Much acknowledges students' efforts and some gives good guidance on how to improve their work, but not all is informative enough.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is improving but there is still a long way to go. Students are pleased to say that behaviour in lessons is getting better. Older students in particular believe that fewer lessons are now disrupted by poor behaviour. Students' attitudes to learning are improving because more teachers are trying to involve them more actively in their learning, rather than have them sit passively listening to the teacher talk. As on past inspections, students' attitudes and conduct are directly linked to the quality of teaching they receive. Behaviour around the building remains variable. Staff do not consistently deal with poor behaviour in corridors and social areas as a matter of course. Students' behaviour during the fire alarm and evacuation was appropriate. Bullying has decreased and students say that they continue to feel safe in school. Attendance has improved but the proportion of students who are persistently absent remains too high. Similarly, the number of students who are excluded from lessons is also too high. Punctuality has improved slightly as a result of the newly introduced five-minute travel time between some lessons. However, not all students demonstrate enough sense of urgency when moving from one lesson to the next. Inspectors observed sizeable numbers of students snacking, texting and generally dawdling along from one lesson to the next. The lack of presence of senior staff to chivvy on students at these key times was also noted. There was a noticeable increase in the amount of litter strewn around the floors after break and lunchtimes.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The recent changes to senior leadership have had a very positive impact on staff morale and in the way leaders at all levels are now held to account. Swift decisions have been made and staff have been galvanised into sharing a zero tolerance of inadequate teaching. Leaders and managers realise that the key to securing good learning and progress is through good quality teaching. A renewed sense of urgency exists and leaders and managers are putting significant time and effort into ensuring all staff work towards a higher proportion of Year 11 students attaining a GCSE at grade C or above. Senior leaders are aware that they are not putting enough focus on checking how well students are making progress or ensuring more make the minimum expected progress. The curriculum continues to meet the needs of most pupils. Monitoring of students' progress is sharper and staff have more confidence in the reliability of assessment data. However, tracking systems are not yet robust enough and confusing information is given to parents and carers about their children's achievement. The governing body is getting better at holding leaders to account and this is being helped by the honest and accurate reports it now receives from school leaders. Governors and senior leaders now ensure that appropriate checks are made on all staff as to their suitability to work with children. Newly qualified teachers are happy with the

support they receive and have been given opportunities to observe good practice in other schools.

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 – satisfactory

External support

The school receives good quality support from the local authority. This has been targeted well, particularly in supporting newly qualified teachers and the mathematics department. Through the local authority working in tandem with the incoming sponsor, the previous weaknesses in the senior leadership team have been managed effectively. The school is currently advertising for a substantive principal and the deputy head teacher will be leaving at the end of the year.