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6 December 2012

Mr P Tolson
Headteacher
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Lancashire
PR25 2TP

Dear Mr Tolson

Special measures monitoring inspection of Wellfield Business and Enterprise College

Following my visit with Brian Sharples HMI to the school on 4 and 5 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2012. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

The statement of action and the school's development plan are fit for purpose.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Executive Director for Children & Young People for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2012:

- Ensure that the proportion of students leaving with five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics at least meets or exceeds the national average by:
 - creating a rigorous and robust monitoring system which raises teachers' expectations of all students' capabilities and ensures that targets provide sufficient levels of challenge regardless of students' abilities, backgrounds or starting points
 - enabling all staff to use assessment information precisely to match work to meet individual students' needs
 - increasing opportunities for well-planned, independent learning in lessons and devising clear assessment procedures so that accurate and more frequent assessment is used to accelerate students' progress
 - ensuring that the curriculum meets students' needs more effectively and supports them to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Improve behaviour and prevent bullying by:
 - creating a clear and effective set of procedures for managing behaviour and ensuring that they are understood by all staff and students
 - consistently and fairly applying the school's procedures for managing behaviour and preventing bullying
 - encouraging all students to develop a positive approach to the learning opportunities that teachers provide
 - increasing supervision around the school site at break and lunchtimes.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - strengthening the accountability of middle leaders for securing good or better teaching in their areas, ensuring that there are rigorous procedures to monitor, evaluate and review the quality of provision and its impact on progress
 - creating robust processes for self-evaluation involving a range of stakeholders
 - developing a succinct school development plan with specific, measurable and time-bound targets to help drive improvement quickly and securely
 - using performance management effectively to support improvements in teaching and learning in order to raise achievement.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 December 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work including carrying out lesson observations; some of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised documents including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the latest student progress data, records of students' behaviour and minutes of the governing body meetings. They met with senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, groups of students, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the structure of the governing body has been reviewed. A new committee, the standards and effectiveness committee, has been put in place and this group of governors takes responsibility for monitoring the school's development plan. In September, six members of staff joined the school including five teachers. One of these teachers is the new subject leader in mathematics. The school is currently in the process of recruiting new subject leaders for science and art and technology.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Since the previous inspection the school's GCSE examination results for 2012 have been published. These results show that the achievement of students declined in 2012 when compared to the previous year. Such was this decline that the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11. Improvements in the quality of teaching and positive signs in students' books indicate that achievement since September has started to improve but it is still below national averages and the rate of improvement is not fast enough to overcome the legacy of underachievement.

At the start of the autumn term students were set challenging targets in each subject; raising their aspirations and their teachers' expectations. When asked students are clear about their targets and are able to describe what they need to do to achieve them. Students' progress against these targets is tracked termly. However, the tracking information collected does not give an accurate picture of how well students are doing. As a consequence, leaders and managers are unable to determine, precisely, the progress that groups of students make, nor confidently predict end of year results. However, better systems have been introduced to identify individual students who are underperforming and provide them with additional help; although it is too early to assess the impact these new systems are having on achievement.

The school has effectively used the funding it receives from the pupil premium to provide support, including extra specialist teaching in English and mathematics for

targeted students. As a consequence, the achievement of students who are entitled to this funding has started to improve, albeit from a low base.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is improving and is better than it was at the previous inspection. Although some teaching still requires improvement, no inadequate practice was observed. However, in order to overcome the school's history of underperformance and increase the speed at which students make progress the proportion of good and better teaching needs to be greater.

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have given improving the quality of teaching and learning a high priority. Teachers' planning and organisation have improved and they are now more aware of what constitutes effective learning in their lessons. Teachers plan lessons to a consistent format. Learning objectives for each lesson are shared with the students and this allows students to assess their own progress.

In the best lessons students are given opportunities to work in small groups or by themselves. This encourages students' independence and gives them confidence to rely less on their teachers for help and find things out for themselves. For example, in one Year 10 science lesson students demonstrated excellent progress when they explored the ethical issues around reproductive cloning in humans. They searched the internet for information on the range of views on this subject and then discussed and shared ideas with each other. Students make at least good progress in those lessons where teachers skilfully question them, demanding extended answers to help deepen their understanding. Where teaching requires improvement, activities are not matched well enough to the needs of the students. Teachers underestimate what more-able students can achieve. As a consequence, the work they are given to do is too easy and their progress slows. In some lessons the pace of learning is too brisk, with teachers keen to complete all the planned activities. This leaves too little time for the teacher to deal with students' misunderstandings and, as a result, the learning of some students is impaired.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The quality of behaviour observed around the school and in lessons, during the two days of the inspection, was consistently good with most students demonstrating positive attitudes to learning. The school adopted a new behaviour policy in September. This is a comprehensive document that outlines well the philosophy and approaches being used to drive improvements in behaviour and attendance. Rewards and sanctions are clearly outlined and have been shared with governors, staff and students. Implementation of the policy is supported by a well-designed action plan that addresses the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The senior leader with responsibility for pastoral care is relentless in ensuring that the behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school. Behaviour is monitored and detailed records relating to rewards and sanctions are continually updated. An analysis of the school's records relating to behaviour, for the autumn term, show a large reduction in the number of incidents of bullying and

disruptive behaviour compared to the same period last year. One student commented, 'behaviour in school is much better now'. This opinion is typical of the views of both teachers and students. The school has responded to concerns expressed in the previous report about levels of supervision. There is now a high staff presence on corridors and around the school at changeover of lessons and during lunch and break times. This ensures an orderly and safe environment.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Concerns with the school's self-evaluation and development plan, identified at the previous inspection, have been addressed. Senior leaders have an increasingly accurate view of the school's most pressing areas for development and have put in place clear strategies to address them. They rightly recognise that focusing on improving teaching is a key priority and is crucial to speeding up students' progress so that they achieve, at least, in line with national expectations. The role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of their departments is developing. They are now accountable for the quality of teaching in their departments and the standards achieved by students.

In September a robust programme for monitoring the quality of teaching was established by senior leaders. They now check more effectively on the consistency of teaching, giving feedback and guidance to staff identifying their strengths and areas for development. This information is being used to inform the teachers' training programme. However, further improvements are required in how senior leaders identify the progress that groups of students make within lessons and across subjects.

Deficiencies in teachers' performance management described in the previous inspection report are being addressed. The school has a new performance management policy, which ensures that all teachers are accountable for the achievement of the students they teach and the quality of their practice in the classroom. The system linking teachers' performance to pay progression is underdeveloped.

The school has recently reviewed the curriculum, particularly in relation to option choices and subjects at Key Stage 4. However, these changes are recent and it is too early to assess their impact.

Members of the governing body have a realistic view of the school's situation and are fully supportive of the work of the senior leaders in addressing the priorities for improvement. They have set up the standards and effectiveness committee, which is responsible for not only monitoring the progress of the school development plan but challenging leaders and managers to maintain a brisk and effective pace of change.

Inspectors recognise the recent improvements in behaviour and leadership and management of the school, however, further work is still required to tackle the legacy of underachievement and realise the potential of all groups of students.

External support

Local authority school improvement consultants are fully supporting leaders and managers in their drive to improve the school. They have helped with the production of the action plan and statement of action showing the support the local authority will give the school. This plan meets requirements. Local authority officers have helped with development of the school's behaviour policy and been involved with the training of middle leaders. The school has also received support from local schools. One school has provided an advanced skills teacher to work with the science department on a short-term basis. Another school worked with the local authority to support the school in developing the new behaviour policy and a third school is providing advice and support to the senior leadership team.