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21 March 2013

Mrs A Elwiss  
Headteacher  
The Coseley School  
Henne Drive  
Coseley  
Bilston  
WV14 9JW

Dear Mrs Elwiss

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Coseley School, Dudley**

Following my visit with Raye Allison-Smith, Additional Inspector, and Janet Bird, Additional Inspector, to your school on 19–20 March 2013, 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 monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Up to two newly qualified teachers may be appointed, but not in mathematics or design and technology.

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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Dudley local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2012**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - teaching consistently challenges all students, especially the more able, in all subjects and particularly in English and mathematics
  - students have more opportunities to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning
  - students start work quickly without listening to long introductions and a brisk pace of learning is maintained throughout the lesson.
  
- Raise achievement, particularly for the most able, by ensuring that:
  - work consistently challenges and engages all students so that they make good progress in lessons
  - challenging targets are set as a minimum expectation
  - students do not end studies in English language and mathematics early without having the chance to achieve the best possible grade
  - GCSE results in all subjects are at least in line with national expectations.
  
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leaders at all levels by ensuring that:
  - the ambition of the school is communicated clearly so that all staff share a collective understanding and agreement on how to improve further
  - leaders, at all levels, take more responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement in their subject areas through a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation to drive improvement
  - all success criteria in improvement plans are measurable and ambitious, which are reviewed regularly in order to assess the impact of actions to drive school improvement.

## **Special measures: monitoring of The Coseley School, Dudley**

### **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 19–20 March 2013**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, heads of faculties, a representative of the local authority, members of the interim executive board and students. Inspectors observed 23 lessons and made shorter visits to a further nine lessons.

#### **Context**

Since the school was inspected in September 2012, a deputy headteacher has left the school. There have been a few further changes to the senior and middle leadership teams as some staff have left and others have been appointed. An assistant headteacher for English and literacy and an assistant headteacher for mathematics and numeracy have been appointed and will take up their posts in April 2013.

The interim executive board has completed a statutory consultation on the school joining a co-operative learning trust with Hillcrest School, Oldbury Academy and other local partners.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The progress that students currently make in lessons is greater than it was in the inspection in September 2012. In particular, students in Year 11 are not ending their studies in mathematics and English early. Indeed, able Year 11 students were observed in each of mathematics, English and science engaging in advanced work, sometimes beyond the GCSE syllabus. Students have much more challenging targets throughout the school. Much better assessment and better data systems mean that teachers pitch their teaching more accurately to the needs of students. As a result, students benefit from more challenge in their lessons. The greater activity that students experience in their lessons has generated a greater sense of purpose and enjoyment in learning.

While, overall, the attainment of students is improving, the improvement in mathematics is small. In English, data indicates that there is a narrower gap between students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and so gain funding for the government's pupil premium funding, and other students. In mathematics, however, there is no evidence that the gap is narrowing.

Strategies to boost the progress in literacy of students who join the school with low reading ability were too recent in September 2012 for any impact to be seen. These

strategies have, however, borne fruit and are having a substantial effect on the confidence and skills of these students.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved since September 2012. Better data systems mean that teachers target their teaching more accurately. In many lessons, teachers are planning well for the different ability groups in their classes. Students have improved opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and more independence. Teachers organise group work well, particularly so in Years 7, 8 and 9. The starts of lessons are brisk, and no examples were seen of teachers talking for too long.

In a Year 11 English lesson, a teacher was outstandingly successful in developing the writing skills of lower ability students through sharply focused questions, tasks and assessments. A rich variety of tasks had been planned that made provision very well for the varied abilities in the group. In a Year 8 science lesson, students took responsibility for designing their own experiments in groups. Students had specific roles assigned to them so that this group work was purposeful. Students with particular learning difficulties had additional support to make sure that they could fully participate.

In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, a teacher was also outstandingly successful in teaching calculus to the top set. Many of this group intend to follow mathematics at A level, and all students were well motivated and interested in this topic that lies beyond GCSE and is part of the extended work now followed by this set. However, some of the teaching in mathematics does not show the gains apparent in other subjects, including English. The pace of learning is slower, the use of questioning is less developed, teaching is less imaginative and there is not such a good match of teaching to the needs of differing abilities of students in the class. Some instability in staffing since September 2012 has also hindered progress in both mathematics and design and technology.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students say that they feel safe in school, and that the behaviour of students has improved considerably since September 2012 as teachers have better ways of managing behaviour. Teachers use the policy to deal with poor behaviour and reward good behaviour more consistently. Students respond well to opportunities for active learning in lessons and work well together in groups. The incidence of fixed-term exclusions has continued to fall, and records show a sharp fall in the number of students referred for poor behaviour in class. However, the attendance of students is not as good as it was a year ago. The school recently introduced new systems for monitoring attendance to reverse this trend.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The school's improvement since the inspection in September 2012 has been underpinned by much better assessment of students' attainment and by systems for analysing and disseminating this information. Senior leaders now have a much better view of students' progress. This is shared by faculty leaders, who now take more responsibility for ensuring students' progress. Teachers also use and understand this assessment data well, and this has contributed to the improvement in teaching. The information has also resulted in the management of the performance of teachers becoming more rigorous.

The leadership and management of teaching have improved. The evaluation of the quality of teaching is more accurate and there are better opportunities for teachers to improve their practice. Partner schools and local authority consultants have made a significant contribution to this professional development, and continued access to similar opportunities is a purpose of the proposed cooperative learning trust. Leaders share an ambition for the school to succeed, and understand and share in the objectives of the school's improvement plan. Planning has improved at both whole-school and at faculty level.

The interim executive board has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has been effective in monitoring its progress. The recruitment of two new assistant headteachers is aimed at strengthening progress in both English and mathematics, and other action is being taken to develop design and technology. Members of the interim executive board have a good knowledge of how the school's resources are committed, including the pupil premium funding. The interim executive board monitors the impact of this and other spending well.

## **External support**

The local authority, Hillcrest School and Oldbury Academy have provided support for the school through training, consultancy and other direct support. This support has been of good quality and has contributed to the improvement of the school.