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1 May 2013

Mr Eamonn Murphy  
Headteacher  
Astley Sports College and Community High School  
Yew Tree Lane  
Dukinfield  
Tameside  
SK16 5BL

Dear Mr Murphy

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Astley Sports College and Community High School, Tameside**

Following my visit to your school on 30 April 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, other senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and two groups of students. I evaluated the school action plan and scrutinised other key documentation. You and another senior leader accompanied me on a series of brief visits to lessons.

**Context**

There have been no significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection.

**Main findings**

Senior leaders and governors demonstrate an eagerness to be challenged in order to become better for their students and secure at least a good judgement at its next inspection. The school action plan provides a detailed map of how they intend to achieve this, focusing closely on the areas of improvement identified in the inspection in February. All middle leaders have produced their own action plan for their department, following the same format as the school plan which demonstrates the importance you attach to effective

leadership throughout the school. The action plans state what effect the improvements are expected to have on the quality of teaching and how this will raise achievement. Some plans do not make it clear how the impact of actions will be checked in the short term.

Senior leaders have really focused on improving the quality of teaching across the school and this has already had a positive impact. The number of staff who teach consistently good and outstanding lessons has increased since the last inspection. This improvement is a result of whole school and personalised training and an intensive programme of six week action plans for those staff whose teaching is not yet good. All the students spoken to said that teachers talk less which gives them more opportunities to work independently or in groups. As a result students now enjoy their learning more.

In order to raise achievement, there has been a big shift away from looking at student attainment to focusing on the progress every student makes. All students now have aspirational targets based on making better than expected progress. Students spoken to were very positive about this and said it helped them to aim higher and be more successful. They also said that teachers explained what they needed to do to achieve these targets.

Staff are now provided with the appropriate amount of information about their students which enables them to cater for their needs and judge their progress more effectively. Tracking of students' progress takes place regularly throughout the year and teachers produce half termly 'snapshots', outlining how individual students will be supported if they are underachieving. Senior leaders have worked on improving the way this information about how well their children are doing is reported to parents and there are still a few issues to resolve before a final decision is made.

The Chair of Governors believes that the recent inspection has been a catalyst which has galvanised both the governing body and leaders in the school. She and the vice-chair are acutely aware of what needs to be done for the school to become at least good. There is a link governor for each of the areas of improvement in the school action plan and the Chair of Governors now spends half a day a week working alongside you in school.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- sharpen the school and department action plans so that leaders can measure and evaluate the impact of their actions at regular intervals
- refine how to report effectively to parents about their child's progress and achievement.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Senior leaders and governors benefit from, and value the support they receive from the local authority school improvement officer. He is working closely with the school to provide a range of activities, support and challenge which is tailored to their specific needs. His training and coaching focuses on the leadership of learning and he is confident there will be

rapid improvement in this area. The school also benefits from the links you have made with two National Leaders of Education in neighbouring local authorities and the Chair of Governors from one of these schools, who is a National Leader of Governance, will undertake an external review of governance later this month.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Tameside and as below.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- The lead inspector.