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Anthony Cooper
Headteacher
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Daltons Close
Langley Mill
Nottingham
NG16 4HL

Dear Mr Cooper

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Aldercar Community Language College

Following my visit to your school on 11 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in February 2103. The monitoring inspection report is available within your provider room on the Portal.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Susan Barkway
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2013

- Improve teaching and learning throughout the school, but particularly in English, to a level that is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - the work set for students is well matched to their difference abilities and is always sufficiently challenging
 - teachers do not dominate by talking too much in lessons, so that students get more time to work independently
 - the marking of pupils' work provides clear and detailed feedback about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in English, by ensuring that:
 - the gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of students are narrowed so that they all achieve equally well
 - students who are persistently absent achieve better examination results by attending more regularly.

- Ensure leaders secure more rapid improvement by:
 - tackling inadequate teaching more decisively
 - ensuring there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and marking across all subjects
 - sharing more widely the good and outstanding practice that currently exists in the school
 - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders more closely to account for improving the quality of teaching and achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 11 October 2013

Evidence

The inspection focused on progress made with the areas for improvement identified at the previous section 5 inspection.

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and the head of the English faculty. The inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the governing body and local authority. She visited five parts of lessons in English, all of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team, and looked at samples of students' work in English. The inspector also reviewed school documentation, including attendance records and pupil performance data, and looked carefully at the school's central record of checks on staff.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, a new head of faculty for English has taken up post. There are no other significant changes.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders and managers are working effectively to secure school improvement. In 2013, the percentage of students gaining higher grades in GCSE increased, continuing the improving trend seen over the last few years. English results improved from 2012 and the proportion of pupils who made the expected level of progress also increased. The gap in performance between pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and their peers is narrowing more rapidly, including in English. Nevertheless, results in English are still below national averages, and some groups of pupils, particularly the more able, do not make sufficient progress.

The newly appointed head of the English faculty has worked quickly to identify key priorities and to implement strategies for improvement. For example, he has revised the English curriculum to ensure that there is more focus on the progression of the skills that students need in order to move to the next level in their learning. He has also reviewed the approach to marking and ensured that there is greater consistency in the approach taken by teachers. Although, these are not yet fully embedded, there is evidence of a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and the progress of students in lessons.

There are signs of improvement to the quality of teaching. School records indicate that some of the inadequate teaching has been eradicated and that the programme of support, modelling and coaching is helping to improve other aspects of weaker teaching. Some examples of outstanding and good practice were seen during the

course of the inspection. However, there is still too much teaching which requires improvement.

A review of the structure of the governing body has led to a formal reconstitution of the governance of the school. The Chair of the Governing Body stated that governors now receive better quality information and this is helping them to provide a greater level of challenge and support. They have more awareness of data on pupil progress and understanding of the issues which face the school. An external review of the governing body has not yet been carried out, but this is planned for the end of next term.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Regular monitoring, followed by support plans, are helping to improve the quality of teaching.
- The marking of students' work is providing clearer feedback and pupils are given the opportunity to respond to the marking.
- In lessons, students are given more opportunities to work independently.
- The action taken to improve attendance is having a significant impact. Attendance in the 2012–13 academic year was close to the national average and the proportion of persistent absentees has dropped significantly.
- Quality assurance procedures, including progress meetings with the local authority, are ensuring that the impact of actions taken to secure improvement are regularly monitored.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- While coaching and modeling of good practice are beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching, this approach is not yet fully embedded.
- In some lessons, there is too much focus on the task to be completed rather than on the expectations for learning.

External support

The local authority is providing very good support for the school. Consultants commissioned by the local authority have provided professional development, training and coaching for the whole school, faculties and individual members of staff. Regular joint observations of representatives from the local authority with senior leaders are providing an objective view of the quality and helping to identify actions for improvement. In addition, the local authority has identified four experienced governors to be additional members of the governing body. These governors are having a very positive impact on the effectiveness of governance in the school.