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18 November 2013

Mr Mike Gunston  
Interim Headteacher  
The Grange School and Sports College  
Tower Road North  
Bristol  
BS30 8XQ

Dear Mr Gunston

**Special measures monitoring inspection of The Grange School and Sports College**

Following my visit with Joseph Skivington and Lesley Voaden, additional inspectors, to your school on 14 and 15 November 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 April 2013. 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.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs) unless I approve the plans to support NQTs during their induction year.

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, the Education Funding Agency, the Chief Executive of the Cabot Learning Federation and the Director of Children's Services for South Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely  
Michael Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2013**

- Take action to eliminate inadequate teaching and increase the proportion that is good across all year groups, including the sixth form, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - insist on high standards of behaviour at all times
  - expect the very best work from all students
  - ensure work set in lessons matches students' different capabilities and that all are fully involved in the tasks
  - improve the way they use questioning in lessons to check students' understanding and involve them more in their own learning
  - improve feedback to students so that they know how to improve their work and that they check that students act upon the teachers' suggestions.
- Raise achievement, especially in mathematics, science and the humanities subjects, and narrow the gap in achievement between those supported by the pupil premium and other students, by:
  - closely checking students' performance to identify any underachievement
  - rapidly giving support to those students who are in danger of underachieving
  - improving the support provided to disabled students and those who have special educational needs, both in class and when students are withdrawn for extra help.
- Strengthen the way in which all leaders improve teaching and ensure good achievement, including in the sixth form, by:
  - checking regularly that teaching is good enough and accurately identifying where improvements are needed
  - providing effective guidance and support to teachers, including the chance to see the best teachers teaching
  - checking that teachers follow up advice and instructions given after lesson observations and act on these successfully so that students' achievement improves
  - holding teachers in all subjects strongly to account for the quality of their teaching and assessment and how well students achieve.
- Increase the effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account by:
  - ensuring that governors are more active in monitoring the school's performance and that they check regularly that agreed actions are proving effective in improving the quality of teaching and closing the gaps in achievement
  - commissioning an external review of governance in order to assess how else this aspect of leadership may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 November 2013**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection we observed 26 lessons, most of which were accompanied by a senior leader. We met with the interim headteacher, interim deputy headteacher, senior leaders, the executive headteacher, the Chief Executive from the Cabot Learning Federation, members of the local authority, members of the governing body, a group of subject leaders, groups of students and a group of teachers. We evaluated the local authority's statement of action, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. We also analysed a number of other documents along with plans for the use of pupil premium funds (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from armed service families).

### **Context**

From 1 September the school has been supported by the Cabot Learning Federation which has provided staff to cover the leadership of the school. There is an interim headteacher who works three days a week in the school and an interim deputy headteacher who also works three days a week at the school. Their work is overseen by an executive headteacher who works one day a week in the school. The Chief Executive of the Cabot Learning Federation oversees this support.

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

Results of the 2013 GCSE and A-level examinations reflect why the school was placed in special measures. Achievement remains inadequate because there was not enough time to bring about the necessary improvements between April and the time students sat their final examinations in May and June.

You have introduced clear systems to track the progress of students across all years so any underachievement can quickly be identified and then rectified. Students are tested each six weeks to check on how well they are achieving from their starting points and against their challenging targets. As yet there is not sufficient information to identify if students are now making good progress. However, early indications are positive. This is also confirmed through your senior team's considerable number of lesson observations which show that students generally make at least good progress during lessons. This was confirmed by observations made during the inspection where students typically made better progress.

Support for disabled students and those with special educational needs has improved. The school has been well supported by the local authority to gain a better overview of the needs of students. A change to areas of responsibility for senior leaders has also meant that there is a greater focus on how well students who are receiving additional support are progressing. This has also been extended to

students for whom the school receives pupil premium funds. There is now a coherent overview of how this funding is being used as well as frequent checks on how effective it is at reducing the attainment gap between these students and others. Again, early indications are positive. All staff know which students are receiving additional support and how they need to adapt their lessons to better meet individuals' needs.

A major reason why students are making better progress is that the quality of teaching has improved so that students are challenged, particularly the most able. Consequently, behaviour has improved and students are better able to make good progress. Students are often given opportunities to discuss their work as a preparation to writing and standards in speaking, listening and writing are improving as a result.

### **The quality of teaching**

The strong focus on improving teaching and ensuring all teachers understand what is expected from them has meant the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Far more teaching is typically good and there are pockets that are outstanding. The school is ensuring that the quality of teaching of sixth form lessons is improving, with greater challenge. You quite rightly recognise that there is more to accomplish and all inadequate teaching has not been eradicated, although it is much reduced.

Work better meets the varying needs of different groups within lessons and the most able are generally challenged and stretched by the activities set. Staff have a better understanding of the different needs of groups within their lessons. The seating plans are used well to ensure all teachers are aware of any additional support students may need. This has also helped to eliminate much of the off-task behaviour by some students.

The best teachers challenge students with good questions which they then follow up so that all learners are expected to explain their answers. This shows how well they have understood the work. In mathematics, teaching has improved because teachers concentrate on ensuring students understand their work. For example, students knew why they factorise quadratic expressions and they could extend their knowledge when factorising the difference between two square terms.

In lessons, teachers check how well students are progressing. They then intervene if additional work to either extend or help students is needed. The quality of marking has improved both in its frequency and its effectiveness. When work is marked students are asked additional questions which they have to answer either before, or at the start of, their next lesson. The great majority of students respond well to these along with teachers' comments and suggestions.

When teaching is outstanding there is a real buzz of enthusiasm in lessons. Students are highly motivated and respond well. In all lessons teachers have very good relationships with their students because they care and want students to achieve

well. Students are also aware of how they can help the school improve by working well and cooperating with each other and staff.

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

Behaviour has improved because the quality of teaching has improved. You, along with your senior team, set a very good example to students and to staff by having a high profile around the school. As one student reported, 'If you look round you will nearly always see the head or another senior leader, they always welcome you and make you feel important.' Another commented that students are keen to support their school come out of special measures as soon as possible. Their positive attitude has meant that staff have been able to concentrate on delivering better lessons rather than having to challenge weaker behaviour.

Students feel safe within school as they feel well cared for and they know if they have any concerns staff are always available to help. Students said they find tutor periods useful when they are considering stories in the news. For example, they had discussed the issues around sending inappropriate images by either mobile phones or through social networking sites when they had been given prominence in the daily news. Students also said that they and their peers were very tolerant of differences and that there was a good understanding of issues related to single sex couples.

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

The very strong steer and example given by yourself, supported by the executive headteacher, the Chief Executive of the Cabot Learning Federation and the seconded deputy headteacher, has invigorated staff, across all levels, within the school. By modelling outstanding leadership qualities you have ensured staff feel valued and empowered to respond to the many challenges they face. This is best shown by the way in which teachers have responded to the challenge of being held to account for the quality of their teaching. Staff see this as highly supportive and developmental. They are not unduly concerned about the large number of observations of their lessons.

You have ensured that any weaker performance is challenged. Support is given, either by yourself or by other staff within the Cabot Learning Federation. This has brought about improvements to the overall quality of teaching and is starting to impact upon achievement. Subject leaders are becoming more effective in identifying areas of teaching which need improving and are starting to support staff to bring these about; although you rightly recognise that not all subject leaders are at the same level and some need additional support.

Teachers have valued the weekly sessions to help them improve their standard of teaching, especially when time is available for subject areas to follow up the training to see how best they can incorporate and adapt the different aspects of teaching covered into their repertoire of teaching. Staff also value the sessions where staff in the school demonstrate good practice to others. They appreciate that leaders have

rightly recognised there is much good practice within the school. They also value the external support and being able to observe good practice in local Cabot academies. The recent conference where all staff from the Cabot Learning Federation met was well received.

The local authority continues to support the governing body. An audit of skills and expertise has been completed as part of an external review and this is being analysed to identify what further support the governing body needs. Governors are better able to challenge and support the school and commented that they find reports from senior leaders informative and very useful.

### **External support**

The local authority has commissioned the Cabot Learning Federation to support the school. Advisers from the local authority meet with the Federation frequently to gain reports on how effective support has been, for example the recent evaluation of the quality of teaching undertaken by the Federation. However, the local authority has not undertaken the frequent evaluations of its own which were identified in its statement of action, to see how well the school is improving. The local authority has effectively supported the mathematics department through an external consultant, the work of the special educational needs coordinator and the governing body.

The Cabot Learning Federation has drawn upon its extensive network of support, including providing staff to take on the leadership of the school, and this has been highly successful in bringing about improvements to the strategic direction of the school, the quality of teaching and is starting to bring about improvements to achievement. This support is very well received by staff who feel that they are treated as professionals and hence they are more prepared to make greater efforts.