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25 November 2013

Mrs Michelle Costello  
Headteacher  
Settle College  
Giggleswick  
Settle  
North Yorkshire  
BD24 0AU

Dear Mrs Costello

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Settle College, North Yorkshire**

Following my visit to your school on 22 November 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 September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure that the improvement plan clearly identifies who is responsible for checking that actions have taken place against precise timescales and who is checking their impact
- improve the accuracy of teaching judgements and ensure that clear timescales indicating when improvements are expected are included in feedback to teachers.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders. Together we undertook a brief tour of the school and visited some lessons. I met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school improvement plan and other monitoring evidence including performance management targets and lesson observation documents.

### **Context**

There have been no changes to context since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection in September you have taken the lead in stressing the urgency and need to become at least a good school within the next 18- 24 months. You have hit the ground running this term. Staff agree that a very good start has been made in starting to tackle the areas for improvement.

You have focused sharply on the need to improve the quality of leadership and management. A specific focus has been on improving the ways middle and senior leaders go about improving teaching including the use of Teachers' Standards to inform targets for individual teachers. An impact of this approach is clearer and more challenging targets set for both staff and students. You and other leaders recognise the need to improve teaching over time so that rates of student progress, particularly for the more able in the sixth form, increase quickly. In order to do this you have started to create opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other and develop their practice to match that of the best teachers.

Focused and regular learning walks, joint lesson observations, analyses of students' work and departmental health checks are starting to help you measure the rates of progress against the areas for improvement raised in the inspection. You recognise that further work is needed in making sure that all leaders accurately judge the quality of teaching and are clear as to when improvements should have been made.

Although initially shocked, staff and governors have quickly accepted that this is not yet a good school due to the need to improve leadership and management. They can already see that early actions have been taken and staff report that they feel increasingly empowered to improve the school further. You and other senior leaders have successfully started to raise levels of expectation about what could and should be expected from staff and students. Staff are finding these clearer expectations helpful in supporting them to improve.

The improvement plan does address each of the areas for improvement from the recent inspection. Overall it is a strong plan because there are usually clear and measurable targets. However, to increase the potential of the plan to support rapid improvement greater attention is needed to the implementation of actions that will quickly eradicate teaching that is less than good. The plan would also benefit from greater clarity around who is responsible for checking the actions have the intended impact, with more opportunity to include governors and middle leaders in this work.

Governors have started to improve how they hold the school to account for the standards it achieves. This is because they have a strengthening awareness of what the key barriers to becoming at least a good school are. As one governor said, there has been a "sea change" in the way governors approach their role. Governors are determined that the school will improve quickly.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

Until recently, the local authority has provided limited support for the school. This was because previous inspection reports were positive and the weaknesses in the quality of aspects of the school's work were not identified quickly enough. The local authority is now increasing its level of support and this has been valued by the school. Work has included recent reviews of the sixth form and governance and the local authority has brokered a meeting with a Chair of Governors from a local outstanding 11-19 academy to help further improve governance.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**