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28 November 2013

Mr R Barnes  
Headteacher  
Fleetwood High School  
Broadway  
Fleetwood  
Lancashire  
FY7 8HE

Dear Mr Barnes

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Fleetwood High School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 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 most recent monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged as having serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in March 2013. 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 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.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve further the quality of teaching across the school so that all teaching is at least good in order to raise students' achievement by:
  - making sure that teachers give activities to students in lessons are neither too easy nor too difficult
  - making sure that students have more opportunities to find things out for themselves rather than relying too much on the teacher
  - making sure teachers avoid over-long introductions to lessons so that students remain enthusiastic and want to learn
  - improving the consistency and quality of marking so that it shows students what they need to do to improve their work
  - making sure that teachers apply the school's policies and procedures for dealing with poor behaviour consistently well.
  
- Improve achievement in mathematics and ensure that all students make at least good progress by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students are capable of achieving
  - making sure that students gain a firm grasp of basic mathematical skills in Key Stage 3 so that they are able to tackle more difficult tasks in Key Stage 4 with greater confidence and ease
  - providing more opportunities for students to apply their mathematical skills in solving problems.
  
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that subject leaders check rigorously on students' achievement and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility and use the outcomes to identify and tackle areas for improvement, especially in mathematics.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 27 November 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the teacher with subject responsibility for mathematics and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also briefly met with the Chair of the Governing Body. Discussions were also held with groups of students from Years 9 and 11. The inspector reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school including the self-evaluation, the single central record, achievement data and a range of summary reports linked to the areas identified as requiring improvement. The inspector also observed eight lessons jointly with senior leaders.

### **Context**

There has been significant staff turnover since the end of the school year in July. In order to balance the budget, there has been a significant restructuring of staffing. There are now 13 fewer full-time equivalent staff at the school. A new line management structure was put in place from September, with new job descriptions. The pastoral structure of the school was also re-organised from a 'house system' to 'year teams'. A number of classes are being covered by long-term supply teachers. In particular, the mathematics department has two long-term supply teachers currently replacing staff who left in the summer. An Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral Management has been seconded through the local authority to develop and co-ordinate approaches to improving behaviour and attendance.

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

Leaders and managers have secured some improvement this year, although inconsistencies still remain between classes and subjects. There has been a rise of 13 percentage points in the proportion of students attaining 5A\*-C grades (including English and mathematics) to 38.5%. The impact of focused intervention and support over the previous year has resulted in 54% of students attaining at least a grade C in mathematics. This was an area identified as needing improvement in the March 2013 inspection. However, outcomes in English were disappointing with only 45% of students attaining a C grade or above. The gap between pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in care of the local authority and those from armed services families) students and their peers is closing, albeit slowly. Current performance predicts further improvement in 2014. Despite this, attainment remains below the government floor standards (these set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress).

A major restructuring of faculties and the pastoral system ensures clearer line management and greater accountability. This is linked to regular monitoring of teaching and learning and more robust performance management linked to salary progression. Students commented that senior staff now have a more noticeable presence around the school and in lessons.

Governors have a clear understanding of their statutory duties and an independent review of the governing body in the summer term identified that 'they had sound knowledge of the school and of their roles which enables them to hold school leadership to account effectively.' They are more pro-active in challenging underperformance. For example, all

subject leaders are now accountable for teaching and learning and developments in their areas of responsibility. They have to present to governors an updated report based on self-evaluation for debate and scrutiny.

The single central record is well-managed and meets requirements fully. Safeguarding procedures are secure. A full check is currently being carried out to ensure that records of all staff hold the latest information.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Self-evaluation at whole-school level is detailed and analytical. Managers recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and this knowledge is being used effectively to refine plans for further improvement.
- The restructuring of staffing is providing greater stability with less disruption to students' learning through staff absence.
- The revised curriculum better meets the needs of students. More-able students are much better catered for by being able to opt for more academic subjects.
- The focus on the training of subject leaders is helping to drive up standards and raise expectations. Subject leaders are receiving personal support from their subject colleagues from a range of schools with identified strengths in particular subject areas. This support has been brokered by the local authority. This is making subject leaders more confident in their roles and further coaching is being provided to enable them to challenge weaker practice and support improvement. However, impact is not yet uniform across the school.
- An on-going, extensive and personalised programme of staff development and training is raising staff awareness of what constitutes good teaching.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Although school and local authority monitoring suggests that the majority of teaching is good overall, lesson observations during this monitoring inspection identified that this is not yet consistent practice across the school.
- There is lack of challenge in some lessons. More-able students, in particular, are not always being stimulated by the quality of the questioning or the tasks set. Too few students attain the highest levels in GCSE examinations.
- Extensive training has raised teacher awareness of a wide range of strategies which can support good teaching. However, some teachers still lack the confidence to decide what is appropriate and what is not. This leads to a formulaic approach in lessons which stifles creativity and challenge. There is often a tendency to use approaches which are not always appropriate for that lesson. For example, it is not always necessary for students to peer and self-assess their work in every lesson as this can become monotonous and counterproductive.
- A culture of dependency still pervades too many lessons. In a majority of the observed lessons students were being guided towards an answer rather than being encouraged to develop their own thinking. The time students can work independently is limited. Students rarely had extended periods to read, write or discuss issues in class and many are still too reliant on the teacher to provide the answer.

## **External support**

The local authority continues to provide good and extensive support to the school. The school receives on-going advice and support from the local authority monitoring and intervention team. The help provided by consultants and lead practitioners from the partner school has led to improvements in mathematics. Support has also been brokered to provide individual advice and training for every subject across the school, but especially for English, modern foreign languages as well as for behaviour and attendance. Funding has also been provided to enable middle leaders to attend subject meetings and to join subject associations as part of subject-specific support. In addition, school leaders have been supported by two teaching and learning audits and joint lesson observation training. This is co-ordinated and managed well. A similar level of support is to continue into the spring term.