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28 March 2014

Mrs Kathryn Barton  
Headteacher  
Up Holland High School  
Sandbrook Road  
Orrell  
Wigan  
Lancashire  
WN5 7AL

Dear Mrs Barton

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Up Holland High School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 March 2014 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 October 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 for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

David Selby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise students' attainment by the end of Year 11, and ensure all groups of students, especially the most-able, make at least good progress by:
  - ensuring that the work set for students is well matched to their different abilities and is always sufficiently challenging, especially in mathematics and for the most-able students
  - improving teachers' skills in questioning students in order to develop and extend students' knowledge and skills more effectively
  - ensuring lessons are always motivating, challenging and move on at a good pace
  - giving students more opportunities to work on their own so that they are actively engaged in learning and so that their attitudes to learning, particularly the boys, are always good
  - improving teachers' marking of students' work so that it is of a consistently high quality, provides clear detailed feedback to students on how to improve and ensures that students always are given the opportunity to respond to requests to repeat or improve work
  - ensuring the provision for those students supported through the pupil premium allows them to achieve well
  - providing more opportunities for students to use and apply their numeracy skills as part of work across the curriculum subjects.
  
- Improve further the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, so that they secure more rapid and sustainable improvement by:
  - tackling the remaining small minority of inadequate teaching even more rigorously
  - sharing widely examples of the good and outstanding practice that currently exist in the school
  - improving the accuracy with which heads of departments review and use information about students' attainment and progress
  - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders even more closely to account for quickly improving the quality of teaching and achievement
  - An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 27 March 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative from the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the headteacher of a partner school in the West Lancashire Network of local secondary schools. Teaching and learning was observed in a small number of lessons. A range of documents was considered, including evaluations of the school's recent improvement actions, a summary of senior leaders' evaluation of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The single central record of recruitment checks on adults working in the school was also inspected.

### **Context**

One teacher left the school at the end of the autumn term. Three teachers are absent long-term. New heads of department for English and mathematics joined the school in January 2014. A new governor has been appointed.

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

The headteacher and other senior leaders are further building on the improvement in the school. Expectations of staff and students have been further increased with new approaches to teachers' marking of students' work and a new code for students' behaviour. Senior leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching quality is more systematic. Where teaching is found to require improvement, a step-by-step approach involving middle leaders and senior leaders ensures that development is more likely to take place. Subject leadership has been strengthened by changes to leadership in English and mathematics. Teachers are supportive of senior leaders and the changes they have introduced.

Governors have strengthened their support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure the school continues to make rapid improvement. The governors' standards and effectiveness committee's detailed and thorough scrutiny of the school's plans and the progress being made raises expectations of senior and middle leaders and ensures that they are held to account. A review of governance has been completed. While the conclusions of the review have only been available very recently, governors are already taking steps to improve their practice. They have changed the way meetings are organised and the way they are directly involved in the school. For example, a governor ensured that senior leaders' work on new approaches to raise the achievement of students entitled to support through the pupil premium<sup>1</sup> were evaluated from the earliest stages.

The pupil premium is specific, additional funding provided to support the education of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years, children who have been looked after continuously for a period of 6 months and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces.

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

- Improved teaching is leading to raised achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. The school's current data indicates that more students in Year 11 are on track to achieve the highest grades in English and mathematics than in 2013. The standard of assessed work in GCSE English already completed in school is higher. Year 11 students say that are more confident and that their projected grades have shown marked increases.
- Additional lessons and other activities including visits from GCSE examiners have been organised to ensure that students know what they need to do to increase their achievement.
- Levels of challenge to students have increased. Schemes of work have been reviewed to ensure that activities are demanding enough for students in all years and of all abilities. Teachers' marking supports learning better because it indicates more clearly what students have done well and how they can improve. Teachers increasingly make sure lessons are planned to help students of different abilities learn rapidly. Students' targets now set minimum expectations and also challenge students to do even better.
- Senior leaders have made middle leaders more accountable for the accuracy of data on students' achievement. This has meant that this information is more reliable. It has become more useful in helping senior leaders understand the patterns of achievement of different groups of students. Senior leaders have conducted a detailed review to plan how to ensure that gaps between the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium and others reduce more rapidly. Changes to the organisation of form groups are intended from the start of next school year to allow all teachers to fully contribute to this.
- School records show that the quality of teaching is increasing. This indicates that the combination of training offered by consultants from the local authority and the school's own systems to develop teaching is being successful. The inspector saw evidence of effective teaching which could be used as a model for good or better practice and lessons where the impact of training and development was apparent.
- Implementation of the new behaviour policy has reduced low level disruption in lessons. Students know what is expected and recognise that very good behaviour helps everyone to learn. The number of sanctions applied rose as the new system was being established but has now fallen again.
- Student attendance, which is already above the national average, is increasing further.

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

- Despite the increases in the rate of achievement, which leaders expect to continue, students' progress is not yet fast enough to secure the high attainment expected from the students' generally high starting points. The plans to reduce the gaps in the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium are still at an early stage.

- While improved teaching means that it is usually good, outstanding teaching is infrequent.

### **External support**

The local authority is continuing to provide effective support. Local authority officers are providing good induction support for the new heads of English and mathematics. The school is using local authority officers more to confirm whether improvements are secure. Audits of the quality of schemes of work and of the effectiveness of leadership and management are planned.

The National Leader of Education from Our Lady's Catholic High School, Preston continues to provide helpful and valued support to senior leaders. Senior leaders' skills and confidence has grown. Middle leaders have improved their practice following visits to Our Lady's.

Up Holland High School is an active partner in the West Lancashire Network of local secondary schools. Leaders from Up Holland High School are contributing to the development of student behaviour strategies and shared review in other schools. They are using good practice in schools in the network to support the development of subject leadership.