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3 April 2014

Mrs Farzana Shah  
Headteacher  
Cloughside College  
Bury New Road  
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M25 3BL

Dear Mrs Shah

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Cloughside College**

Following my visit to your college on 2 April 2014, 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 college's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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 college is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The college may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Chief Executive, Greater Manchester West NHS Trust Mental Health Services and the Executive Director of Children's Services for Bury.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve teaching in subjects other than English and art so as to help students make at least good progress by:
  - making sure that teachers know what they expect students to learn in each lesson, that their expectations are high enough, and that they plan well for their lessons and teach what has been planned
  - making sure teachers prepare lessons that are interesting and innovative enough to encourage students to engage in learning and produce a good amount of work
  - making sure that teachers assess the progress that students make in every lesson
  - making sure that all timetabled activities have a clearly defined educational purpose
  - doing more to encourage students to make the right choices and to be more responsible for their own behaviour and learning
  - ensuring students attend the lessons they are expected to be in.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
  - ensuring that the single central register of recruitment and vetting checks meets current requirements and is kept up to date
  - establish clear expectations for students' behaviour and ensure that the agreed approach taken by staff to managing behaviour is consistently followed
  - establishing systems that rigorously track the progress of students
  - taking steps to improve teaching so that it is at least good by ensuring teachers meet the National Teachers' Standards
  - making sure that the targets for improvement in teachers' performance are suitably challenging and that those teachers on upper pay scales demonstrate they provide value for money
  - gathering evidence about the achievement of students, the progress they make and the quality of teaching they receive, to establish an accurate view of the college's strengths and weaknesses and drawing up a robust plan for improvement in the light of the findings
  - developing stable leadership so the college becomes less reliant on external support
  - providing a relevant curriculum for all students and establishing a stable timetable across the college so that there is consistency for all students in relation to groupings and lessons
  - making sure that governors make effective checks on the quality of the college's work, including improving their knowledge of the quality of teaching and improving their understanding of what they should be asking for, including information about students' progress
  - improving the Governing Body's ability to challenge the college's leaders, rather than accepting the information provided as fact.

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

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 2 April 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the college's work, visiting 11 lessons in Junction 17 and in the Gardener Unit. He scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, members of the student council, the Chair of the Governing Body, a member of the governing body who was a past student at the college, representatives of the Greater Manchester West NHS Trust Mental Health Service, and a representative of the local authority.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in October 2013, the deputy headteacher has been suspended. In her absence, the assistant headteacher is managing Junction 17 and a senior teacher is taking responsibility for the Gardener Unit. Two teachers are absent on long-term sick leave.

### **Achievement of pupils at the college**

There has been a notable improvement in the progress and achievement of young men within the secure Gardener Unit. Where previously better progress was seen only in English and in art, good work can now be seen in a broader range of subjects such as geography, physical education and the performing arts. Even better progress is now being made in art and English, with students producing work of high quality and high academic content, respectively. Innovative thinking about the curriculum for students within the Gardener Unit is fostering the development of useful life skills; for example, in mathematics through the study of money management. Students' personal and social skills and health are benefitting greatly through a new venture, the creation of an allotment garden, and through competitive sport.

There has been an almost complete change of students within Junction 17, highlighting the rapid turnover of students within this part of the college's provision. None of the students in class on this monitoring visit were seen during the October inspection. New students were making at least sound progress. Wednesday mornings in Junction 17 are devoted to less academic lessons, aimed at developing creativity, personal and life skills. Horticulture is a recent addition to the curriculum. Students clearly enjoyed lessons and achieved something tangible by the end of each, such as setting seeds within horticulture and making scones within food technology.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching continues to improve within both units. Many of the elements of good teaching are now securely in place in all subjects. This is a significant improvement over the situation at the time of the section 5 inspection a year ago. The college's monitoring records of teaching quality show much greater consistency than in the past. Teachers routinely plan more thoroughly to meet the learning needs of each student in each lesson, setting clear learning objectives so they and students have a clearer understanding

of what is to be achieved. Relationships, subject knowledge and questioning skills continue to be strong. Teachers are effective in securing the confidence and trust of the students.

The marking of students' work and the celebration of work within displays has improved. The development of an effective assessment system is, however, proving elusive. This is not due to a lack of effort. The nature of individual students' mental health issues, the short-term nature of placements (particularly in Junction 17), the range of achievement in which progress is required and the difficulty of establishing levels of prior knowledge, understanding and skills, all combine to make meaningful assessments of students' progress difficult. Senior leaders continue to work with a consultant and network widely to learn what colleges of a similar designation do in order to develop a system of measuring progress and target-setting relevant to students' needs and which facilitate accountability.

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

The ethos of both units is calmer and more settled. In the secure Gardener Unit, students' attendance of lessons has improved considerably, demonstrating a clear increase in motivation to learn by the young men in this unit. This, in turn, reflects the more relevant curriculum on offer to these students, very few of whom would be in receipt of education by choice, outside the college. Increased participation and attendance is also seen within Junction 17, with fewer instances requiring the intervention of nursing staff and their consequent removal to wards. On the whole, students have better attitudes and appear to be more sociable and responsible than before, a view which is borne out by the college councillors.

Partnership working between NHS Trust staff and college staff continues to improve. Nursing staff are more likely to join lessons and therapy sessions are more likely to be adjusted to avoid interrupting lessons. Arrangements to share relevant information between ward and college staff are well established, as demonstrated by the thorough briefing observed to college staff by Trust staff responsible for out-patient students. The closer working between education and nursing staff is ensuring students' safety and well-being to a greater extent than before.

The students are more resilient. On the day of the monitoring visit, the young men in the Gardener Unit were denied the use of their common room because it was being decorated. This might have proved difficult to manage in the past but the Unit's work continued smoothly and to timetable. Indeed, the only objection from a student occurred during a fire alarm practice, when a student made his unhappiness about disruption to his art lesson clear to staff.

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

The improving leadership and management of the college are shown in its ability to cope when faced with unexpected change. Disruptions to the senior team since the last monitoring inspection have not thrown the college off course. Staff stepped forward immediately to take on extra responsibilities.

Important decisions about staffing structures await the resolution of current staffing issues. However, the clarity of vision provided by the headteacher and her high expectations of teachers continues to provide staff with the clearest of leads, so they know exactly what is expected of them. There is better delegation of leadership roles. Accountability is increasingly robust, through lesson observations, performance management and appraisal.

The key partnership with the Trust continues to develop in strength. The Trust is fully committed to the full integration of health, care and education, which includes joint staff training events. There is continued support for the college with funding, most lately for a climbing wall and to provide musical instruments. The Trust is represented on the college's governing body by a senior manager.

Other partnerships have also been further developed. Links with an outstanding hospital college and an outstanding secure unit are established, providing access to models of excellent practice. The headteacher actively seeks links with other colleges, both of a similar nature and mainstream, which should ensure that the college remains outward-looking and avoids insularity. A better partnership with parents is being pursued. More events to celebrate the achievement of students are being staged, parents' concerns are being actively sought and addressed and the college website has been refreshed.

A more relevant curriculum is under development, with higher academic demands within Junction 17, the unit with the majority of students of college age, and a broader offer to the young men in the Gardener Unit, with a greater emphasis on the development of vocational skills and skills for life that are more relevant to their needs.

The review of governance is complete, leading to a better organised governing body with a clearer understanding of the roles of governors. Governors are more actively involved in the life of the college, especially in meeting and talking to students. Governors have a broad base of relevant skills, as parents, for example, as well as professionals. Most exceptionally, an ex-student is a member of the governing body, ensuring the focus on outcomes for students and acting, incidentally, as an excellent ambassador of what the college can achieve.

The quality of information to governors has improved significantly. However, as part of its increasing effectiveness in supporting and challenging the college's leaders, the governing body should now give senior leaders a clear steer of what it requires by way of information on the progress and attainment of students. It should make clear what it sees as success for its students. It is then in a position to require of senior staff the development of assessment and target-setting systems that measure and chart the extent of this success for each student. The governing body then has the information it needs to evaluate how well the college is doing and what further information might be required.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to broker advisory and consultancy support and provide monitoring oversight for the college. However, it has wisely scaled back the magnitude of its intervention as the college improves. The headteacher has established links with local outstanding providers and plans to extend the networking the college undertakes further in

due course. Links with maintained secondary colleges within the local authority are continuing. In all, the college is in a much better position to learn from external good practice and, indeed, contribute to it.