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27 May 2014

Ms Sally Coulton  
Headteacher  
Ellis Guilford School and Sports College  
Bar Lane  
Basford  
Nottingham  
NG6 0HT

Dear Ms Coulton

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Ellis Guilford School and Sports College**

Following my visit to your school on 22–23 May 2014 with Zarina Connolly, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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 November 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 Nottingham.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - encouraging the school's good and outstanding teachers to be more creative and less formulaic in their planning, so that more lessons are fast-paced, exciting and interesting
  - rapidly building the skills of the less effective teachers so that they are able to apply some shared techniques more appropriately
  - ensuring that teachers plan different activities to match the needs of students as well as allowing for different outcomes in each lessons
  - making time for students to respond to teachers' marking by correcting work or extending their learning
  - ensuring that there is always enough challenge for the more-able students in each lesson.
  
- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, in science, for disadvantaged students and for more-able students in English.
  
- Further improve attendance and behaviour by:
  - developing more ways to encourage parents and students to work with the school to promote good attendance
  - ensuring that lessons and other activities offer greater interest and engagement to students
  - building better relationships between students and staff so that there is greater student involvement in improving behaviour
  - providing training for staff in a wider variety of approaches to prevent challenging behaviour from disturbing learning.
  
- Enhance the communication with and participation of parents so that they feel more involved and able to contribute to the improvement of the school.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 22–23 May 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders and with the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met with two groups of students from Year 8 and Year 9. Inspectors observed parts of 11 lessons in the English, mathematics and science departments. They made shorter visits to other lessons to look at behaviour and the Year 7 'Learning to Learn' programme. All of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders. A telephone conversation was held with the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham. One inspector spoke to representatives of the school's 'parents forum'. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the impact of actions taken to improve achievement, behaviour and attendance. The responses to 46 staff questionnaires were also considered.

### **Context**

A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed since the previous monitoring visit in February 2014.

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

The headteacher and the senior team continue to drive improvement with tenacity. They remain focused on improving the quality of teaching and developing a flexible curriculum that builds on strengths in the school's provision. School data shows that achievement in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 is steadily improving. Students in the current Year 11 are attaining standards that are moving closer to the national average, particularly in English. However, whilst improving, the rates of progress and standards being reached by more-able students still lag behind those of similar students nationally. Whilst progress overall in English and mathematics is improving, the gaps in achievement for disadvantaged students are widening. However, more of these students are now on track to achieve five good GCSE qualifications including English and mathematics.

School leaders have devised a comprehensive and creative range of programmes to support teachers in their professional development. The vast majority of teachers responding to the inspection questionnaire agreed that this was a strength of the school. These programmes, such as 'Seven Steps', are supported by a team of lead teachers who coach and support colleagues on structured improvement programmes. During this inspection, it was evident that this work has had a positive impact on some teachers, although not all. Senior leaders monitor teaching quality regularly, and draw from a range of evidence, including progress data and work scrutiny, to reach judgments about the quality of teaching. However, those responsible for monitoring the application of school policies and the quality of teaching within subjects on a day-to-day basis are much less effective.

Consequently, too much variability remains in teaching quality, and in marking and assessment.

Leaders' actions to improve attendance have been mostly effective. Attendance overall, and for the majority of groups of students, has improved on the same period last year. However, the revised behaviour policy has been less effective in practice. This is because it is inconsistently applied by teachers. Both students and teachers agreed that behaviour is not consistently well managed and this was supported by observations during this inspection. Teachers do not yet share a common understanding of what should be expected, both in terms of general behaviour and in the presentation and completion of work during lessons.

Governors have sought some external support from the local authority since the monitoring inspection in February. They have reviewed their effectiveness and the information they receive in order to ensure they can provide greater challenge to the school's leaders. Governors are broadly aware of the school's current strengths; however, they receive too little information on achievement in science, or more widely across Key Stage 3. Because of this, they do not have a full understanding of where improvements need to be accelerated in order to remove the school from its serious weaknesses designation.

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

- Communications with parents have improved since the inspection. The parents forum has been actively engaged in supporting school leaders in making new appointments to the teaching body. Of the 353 respondents to the school's last questionnaire, the vast majority expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school.

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

- The achievement of students in science subjects and across all subjects at Key Stage 3 remains unclear as school leaders do not currently collect and analyse this information in the same depth as they do for English and mathematics at Key Stage 4.
- Subject leaders and those post holders with responsibility for improving provision within subject areas are not yet consistently effective in carrying out their roles. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress students make are not improving as quickly as they should.

### **External support**

School leaders continue to value the support they receive from the local authority. This has been particularly effective in securing an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses in the mathematics and English departments. The school's adviser has

also reported directly to the governing body. This is enabling governors to ask more informed questions about the impact of this additional funding on the achievement of these students.