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1 July 2014

Mrs Amanda Elwiss  
The Coseley School  
Henne Drive  
Coseley  
Bilston  
WV14 9JW

Dear Mrs Elwiss

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Coseley School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 March 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that actions identified have clear, regular and measurable milestones so that progress can be measured effectively
- ensure that the cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review of planned actions is clear, with those responsible at each stage clearly identified
- ensure that all assessments of students' progress are accurate so that predictions of outcomes fall within a smaller range.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, students, members of the IEB and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a range of school documentation was taken into account. A tour of the school was undertaken and a number of short visits made to classrooms.

## **Context**

There has been no significant change to staffing since the last inspection. However, you are currently consulting on a school-wide restructure. In addition, following your retirement at the end of this term the current deputy headteacher will take over as headteacher from September for an agreed period of 12 months before a permanent appointment is sought.

## **Main findings**

You are taking effective action to move the school forward. You, your leaders and members of the IEB have responded very positively to the judgement made at the last inspection. You are very clear that the school must continue its journey to reach good as rapidly as possible through maintaining the momentum of improvement achieved over the last two years.

The improvement in the quality of teaching noted at the last inspection has continued. There is a strong programme of quality assurance that ensures any underperformance is identified rapidly and acted upon. Staff know how and when they will be monitored and are very clear about their accountability for student progress.

You have implemented and developed a training programme that is well-matched to whole school priorities as well as to the needs of individual staff. Teaching and learning support plans are used effectively to both challenge and support teachers where any aspect of their practice is identified as less than good. For instance staff who have been identified as having outstanding practice are deployed effectively to provide support for their peers, thus sharing good practice and developing capacity for further improvement within the school. Good practice is shared more widely through the twilight training programme where teachers frequently lead sessions in their area of expertise.

The school's drive to improve the quality of teachers' marking has paid dividends. Students say that all teachers now provide them with very clear advice about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve and to reach their targets. This was noted during visits to classrooms as part of the monitoring inspection. More recently, you have further increased expectations of both students and teachers

through the introduction of student response activities. Although this is at an early stage, students are increasingly responding to teachers' comments in ways that demonstrate whether they have understood what they need to improve and how to do so. Some teachers are already taking this a step further through checking that students have secured the skill or knowledge in subsequent pieces of work.

Every senior leader is linked to a curriculum area and regular meetings are held with curriculum leaders. These are aligned to the collection and analysis of assessment information so that there is a very clear view of the quality of teaching across the school, its impact on students' progress and where strengths and weaknesses lie. This, along with relatively recent quality appointments of core subject leaders, is now beginning to have an impact on improving leadership overall at this level. As a result of the school's investment in external support and training, both curriculum and pastoral leaders are using information about pupil progress more effectively and assessment is becoming more secure.

The school's own data suggests that achievement is beginning to improve in English and mathematics. This year the school expects attainment in English to be in line with national averages, although attainment in mathematics is likely to remain below national averages. However, school data is not yet secure enough in the core subjects for leaders to be absolutely sure of outcomes for the current year 11, so that the range of possible outcomes remains too wide. As a result, the school is not yet confident that the gap in progress between boys and girls will reduce this year in mathematics. Nevertheless, robust, individual tracking of students funded by pupil premium shows that they are now doing much better than in previous years as a result of targeted interventions matched to need and monitored for impact carefully.

Attendance and behaviour have both improved. The school's records show a marked decline in the number of fixed term exclusions and in the number of times teachers are asking for senior leaders to come to their classrooms. Students say that this is because teachers are now consistently applying the behaviour policy. As a result all students know exactly what is expected of them and the consequences if these expectations are not met. You are currently working on further developing an agreed set of 'non-negotiables' that will assist you in your work to make clear the links between behaviour and achievement.

The reduction in the number of students on roll is likely to continue over the next few years. Consequently, the school is undertaking a major restructure. This needs to be managed very carefully to avoid a negative impact on the progress made by students in the school.

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**

The local authority has provided appropriate support for the school over the last two year, in the form of regular reviews of progress and brokering school to school support. In addition, the school has made good use of support available both from within the trust family of schools and more widely.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Dudley local authority.

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford

**Her Majesty's Inspector**