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4 July 2014

Mr Andrew John  
Headteacher  
Sprowston Community High School  
Cannerby Lane  
Sprowston  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR7 8NE

Dear Mr John

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sprowston Community High School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 July 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last monitoring inspection. The school's revised improvement plan was evaluated. An opportunity to walk the school with a senior teacher gave me the opportunity to observe students at work in lessons.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection three new leaders have joined the senior leadership team, one of whom is seconded from another local school. Ten middle leaders have joined the school, including a new head of sixth form.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior and middle leaders have responded well to the issues raised in the first monitoring inspection. You have revised your improvement plans and are monitoring them closely. This is leading to notable improvement.

Procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and to gauge how well students are progressing are more systematic. Data gained from regular assessments of students' work and from periodic testing is providing a clearer overview of how well individual students are doing. This information is also being used to inform staff of which students need additional support to ensure they meet the expectations of them. All students are now expected to make three levels of progress and plans are under way to extend this to four levels of progress from September 2014.

Evidence gained from regular monitoring of lessons and closer scrutiny of students' work is being matched with assessment data to gauge the overall impact of teaching on students' learning and progress. These procedures are making teachers and middle leaders much more accountable for the standards achieved in their subjects. You and your governors are making better use of this information to raise expectations and challenge underperformance.

Current data shows that this year's GCSE results are expected to rise significantly compared with the previous years. The school anticipates that the percentage of Year 11 students achieving five or more C grades including English and mathematics will be similar to that found nationally. Senior leaders acknowledge the importance of collating further data to illustrate the progress made by all students, including different groups of students, to support their views that all students are making improved progress and achieving well.

In lessons, most students work purposefully and respond positively with teachers and their peers. Their books show a renewed focus on marking to provide them with better quality feedback about their work, but this is inconsistent. In most, but not all subjects students have clear targets to meet. Most of them are provided with suitably challenging tasks in lessons, but more needs to be done to stretch the most-able students.

You are raising expectations and aspirations of all staff by routinely monitoring the impact of changes and developments made on the learning and progress of learners. Your senior and middle leaders are showing an improved understanding of their roles in driving improvements to the school. Recent training for governors and the introduction of an improvement board has added rigour to the governance of the school. They now have the information they need, and the understanding of how to use it to challenge school leaders and contribute to the school's improvement.

## **External support**

Governors value highly the support provided for them by the local authority in developing their understanding of how to support and challenge senior leaders to improve the school's performance. Links with other schools, locally and outside of the region have been brokered to learn from their best practice. Senior leaders recognise that further scope exists to use these links to validate their assessment data and their views on the quality of teaching and learning.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**