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2 July 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 1 July 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 school's previous monitoring inspection.

This visit was the third 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.

I recommend that the next inspection be a full section 5 inspection.

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 Interim Executive Director for Children & Young People 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 exists 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 management may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 1 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and the chair of the governors' standards and effectiveness committee, and a representative from the local authority. He had a telephone conversation with a National Leader of Education who is working with the school. Teaching and learning were observed in a small number of English and mathematics lessons. A range of documents was considered, including the school improvement plan, data on achievement, a summary of leaders' evaluation of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The school's single central record, which records employment suitability checks carried out by the school, was reviewed.

### **Context**

Two temporary assistant headteacher posts have been made permanent.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that the rapid improvement in the school has continued. Many of the changes seen during the previous monitoring inspection are now becoming embedded. Senior and middle leaders' confidence has grown. The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are clear. The systems to ensure that senior and middle leaders are properly held to account are more robust. These are built into senior leaders' line management of middle leaders. Heads of department understand that they have responsibility for the quality of education in their subjects. This has led to more effort to ensure that data on achievement are accurate. The data are, therefore, more useful in checking how students are progressing and deciding how teachers can plan extra teaching if students are falling behind.

The heads of English and mathematics who joined the school shortly before the previous monitoring inspection are now well established and are being effective in improving their subjects.

Senior leaders have undertaken a thorough review of the improvement plan. They are rewriting it for the next school year. Many actions have been completed. Senior leaders accurately recognise the areas where improvement is still needed.

Governors have further improved their challenge to senior leaders. They ask probing questions with an emphasis on understanding what difference leaders are making rather than knowing what activities are happening. The governors' standards and effectiveness committee recently met with the heads of English and mathematics to confirm they were confident that improvement is secure. Members of the governing body have remained focused on their work to ensure the school is as good as it can

be and have not allowed discussion about possible changes to the governance arrangements of the school to distract them.

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

- Teaching has improved further. There is more outstanding teaching. Senior and middle leaders have a better understanding of the quality of teaching over time. They use information from scrutiny of students' work and the progress students make in addition to observation of teachers' practice in making their judgements. Where teaching is still not good enough, teachers continue to receive additional challenge and support to help them improve. Further steps are taken if these are unsuccessful.
- The school's latest data indicate that Year 11 students are on course to reach standards that will far better reflect their generally above-average starting points. Their progress is faster, particularly in English. The proportion of students expected to gain GCSE grades of C or above has risen in most subjects.
- The gaps between the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium and others have reduced. Training has been completed to ensure that teachers are ready for the start of the reorganised form groups from next term. This is intended to allow each teacher to help a small group of students supported by the pupil premium.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the reviews of schemes of work have continued. They understand the importance of this in ensuring that learning is fully effective in Key Stage 3 as a basis for later work.
- Students recognise the improvements in the school. They say that behaviour in lessons has continued to be much improved and that teachers use the behaviour policy fairly. The school's detailed analysis of any incidents of poor behaviour shows that these are reducing.
- Attendance is above average. The higher expectations of students' attendance are continuing to lead to increases.

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

- While achievement is getting better, improvement in mathematics has not been as fast as in English and students with lower starting points are not making as rapid progress as others.
- The introduction of new approaches to marking has been too slow. The quality of marking is inconsistent. While the English department is evaluating a new approach to ensure that students respond to teachers' comments, similar approaches are at an early stage in other subjects. Marking does not challenge poor presentation well enough.

The pupil premium is specific, additional funding provided to support the education of students known to be eligible for free school meals, students 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.

## **External support**

The local authority's support continues to be effective. It is gradually being reduced as improvements become fully established.

School leaders continue to use their partnership with the local authority and local schools to learn from external views on the school's effectiveness. A review of marking led by a senior leader from a school in the West Lancashire Network has recently been completed. The local authority has brokered a review of the school's current use of the pupil premium and its plans to broaden the support for this group of students. This will be conducted by a senior leader from a local school with effective practice in the use of the pupil premium, and will be completed before the end of this term. Local authority officers have indicated that they are willing to support a review of the leadership of English, mathematics and science early next term; such a review would be helpful in checking that rapid improvement in these subjects continues.

A National Leader of Education from Our Lady's Catholic High School, Preston continues to provide support. This has contributed to the effectiveness of senior leaders, particularly when they take on new responsibilities.