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14 July 2014

Mr Paul Gittins  
Headteacher  
Newsome High School and Sports College  
Castle Avenue  
Newsome  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
HD4 6JN

Dear Mr Gittins

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newsome High School and Sports College, Kirklees**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 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 governors 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 all teachers set high levels of challenge for students, particularly the most able
- Effectively implement the improved systems to measure students' progress so that teachers can act quickly to support students' learning.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The post Ofsted action plan and

other documents were evaluated. A number of English and mathematics lessons were observed, a tour of the school was made with the headteacher and students were spoken with informally at lunchtime.

## **Context**

Five new teachers will be joining the school in September to fill vacancies in Science (2), English, Food Technology and Physical Education. The SENCO is retiring and will be replaced from within the existing school staff. There remains a vacancy for an English teacher that will be covered in the short term by increasing existing part time staff contracts. A review of senior leaders' roles and responsibilities is also planned.

## **Main findings**

Governors, the headteacher and senior leaders have responded swiftly and positively to the recommendations of the last inspection. The post Ofsted action plan builds on work that was already underway and focuses clearly on the areas for improvement with appropriate actions and milestones. There is a need to ensure that this plan is used as a working document and regularly updated with the impact of actions taken.

The headteacher has spearheaded immediate action to counter low level disruption in classrooms. This included assemblies that reinforced the schools standards and expectations to all students. Signage was renewed in classrooms to reinforce these expectations and senior leaders undertake regular learning walks to ensure that high standards of behaviour are consistently insisted upon by all teachers. The impact of these actions has seen a significant fall in the number of behaviour incidents since Easter 2014.

Leaders of English and mathematics have worked together on a programme of interventions for GCSE students to ensure they achieve the best results possible in their summer examinations. These interventions have been carefully planned and thoroughly evaluated to ensure they have the necessary impact. Current school predictions, together with grades already achieved, show that both progress and attainment measures are set to rise this year. However predictions show that the achievement of the most able students is not likely to improve and this remains a priority for the school.

Training to improve teacher's questioning skills has been undertaken by staff in the core subjects. Skilled questioning was observed in English where teachers teased out the subtleties of language and encouraged students to explain their views and understanding in detail. A renewed focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning is planned for September through professional development and the introduction of new systems to measure students' progress. The impact of these initiatives will form a focus for the next monitoring visit.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school, they have organised an effective committee structure to ensure they have a more detailed understanding of the school's work. They undertake regular visits to the school and attend senior leadership meetings working alongside the headteacher and others. Governors have undertaken training since the last inspection and they have also added three Governors to the board who have specific educational expertise. They are now more confident in their own assessment of the school's performance but understand that this needs to be benchmarked against national and local comparators.

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 school is working closely with the local authority and they support the school's plans for improvement. The local authority will continue this next year through a school improvement partner who is already working closely and regularly with the headteacher and the Governing Body. The school has formed a partnership with a local outstanding school. Middle leaders are undertaking visits to observe best practise, they are discussing their findings with senior leaders and forming plans to implement aspects of what they have seen within their departments. This work is at an early stage and should remain sharply focused on the areas for improvement if it is to yield the necessary impact.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Kirklees and as below.

Yours sincerely

Helen Storey

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy