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Catherine O'Driscoll
Headteacher
Kingsbury School and Sports College
Kingsbury Road
Erdington
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Dear Ms O'Driscoll

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kingsbury School and Sports College

Following my visit with Susan Hickerton and Robert Steed, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 14–15 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.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Make teaching at least consistently good, in all subjects, by ensuring that teachers:
 - set stimulating work in lessons at the right level of difficulty to engage students
 - frequently check the progress made by students during lessons and amend activities when needed to ensure a good pace of learning is maintained
 - mark books regularly, ensuring that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach and exceed their targets, and have time to respond to the advice given.
- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the work set challenges students of all ability levels to aim higher
 - improving the support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium
 - ensuring that disabled students and those who have special educational needs have the right resources and are set appropriate work.
- Eliminate low-level disruption and poor behaviour in lessons and around the school, by ensuring that staff are consistent in the way they use strategies to manage behaviour.
- Ensure the range of subjects and courses offered matches the needs and interests of all students, by ensuring that:
 - sufficient attention is given to creative subjects
 - the courses students study on other sites are properly monitored
 - checks are made on how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is provided.
- Raise attendance rates by promoting the importance of regular attendance to students and their parents and carers.
- Improve subject leadership where it has weaknesses, and ensure assessment data are accurate across all subjects.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 14–15 July 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with you and other senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, groups of students, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and the executive headteacher of the supporting school.

Context

Since my last visit to the school, a number of new staff have joined the school and two members of staff have left. You have recently completed the formal consultation stage regarding the restructure of senior management and this is due to be implemented in September 2014.

Achievement of pupils at the school

You and your leadership team have worked hard to improve the way in which data are collected and students' progress tracked. You are now much more confident that you have all the information you need to identify where students are not making enough progress. However, not all subject leaders are yet able to use the information to plan for earlier, targeted intervention where needed. Furthermore, although classroom teachers are now better informed about the starting points of students, this has not yet had a notable impact on achievement. Consequently, although students' progress has very gradually improved since December, the rate of that improvement has been too slow to close the gap with their peers nationally. There are positive signs that gaps between students eligible for additional funding and others are beginning to narrow. Nevertheless, both progress and attainment remain significantly below national averages for all groups, and predicted outcomes for Year 10 students do not suggest that there will be a substantial change in 2015.

Plans to increase the proportion of students making three and four levels of progress in English and mathematics identify appropriate actions. However, the majority of these will not be fully implemented until September, or have not yet had a measurable impact because they have been introduced only very recently. For instance, 'flight paths' have been introduced for all students from Year 7 onwards in order to track the students' progress. Both staff and students find these easy to understand and, increasingly, students are asking what they need to do to improve. Your vision is that this will develop into a dialogue between teacher and student that focuses on progress from starting points, but this is not yet the case.

You are planning to introduce online common mark books from September that will require staff to provide progress information that is supported by samples of

students' work. Your intention is that this will support the evidence-based culture you wish to develop.

A review of how the school identifies support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs has been undertaken. It is now the case that every student with an additional need has a slot within the week where targeted intervention can be provided. Parents have been involved in the intervention plans, and this has improved their engagement with the school and their child's learning. The new approach will be embedded next term and you are confident that the progress gap between these students and their peers will be significantly reduced.

The school has also invested in an online fine grading tool for more precisely recording the progress made by students. This will support teachers to identify interventions that address specific gaps for those students not making at least expected progress. Again, this will be available from September.

The quality of teaching

You have a realistic view of the quality of teaching in the school and you are aware that not enough teaching is consistently good to achieve the accelerated progress required. The school's records show that teaching has improved since the last inspection and students agree that lessons are now more interesting and challenging in some subjects. However, they also say that this not the case in all their lessons. Inspectors found that too much inadequate teaching remains and there is much that requires improvement. As a result, students across the school are not catching up on previous underperformance rapidly enough.

Not all teachers are making effective use of the recently introduced whole-school planning format. This means that some activities are overly focused on measuring progress by outcome rather than carefully matching tasks to the different abilities of groups of students. Consequently, students do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for the most able, who, too often, are not provided with appropriate challenge.

You have implemented a whole-school marking policy that requires teachers to identify what students have done well and what they need to improve. Increasingly, staff are following this process. However, there is considerable variation in the quality of comments made. Where advice for improvement is clearly linked to students' target grades or skills development, the impact of marking on students' progress can be seen. Where advice lacks a clear focus, the impact is minimal and the same errors can be seen repeated in subsequent work.

Evidence analysed during the inspection showed that much teaching over time still requires improvement and a significant amount remains inadequate. Nevertheless, some good and outstanding examples were seen of the impact of teaching on

students' progress. In these cases, students' specific learning needs were well met, and both they and their teachers were very clear about what they needed to achieve. For example, in a Year 11 religious studies lesson, tasks were carefully matched to the different abilities of groups of students, with additional challenge made available at each level. Students reported that they knew where they were in their learning and what they needed to achieve next because marking was helpful. Consequently, they were confident to rise to challenges in lessons.

All students are aware of their minimum targets and their 'challenge' targets. In those lessons where teachers have high expectations, it was notable that the emphasis was nearly always on the 'challenge' target. Students said that they appreciated this and that it increased their motivation to succeed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Progress has been made in improving behaviour. This is because the new behaviour management policy that was introduced last term has now become part of the school's everyday practice. The school's records show that the number of logged behaviour incidents has reduced for all key measures, including internal and fixed-term exclusions. This is because teachers are applying the agreed strategies consistently so that students know exactly what is expected of them and the consequences of non-compliance.

The 'Super 6' system is working effectively to encourage students to behave better in and around the school because they understand what the rewards and sanctions will be. There is a developing sense of collective responsibility for behaviour between students as a result of the newly established house system that rewards members for carefully selected behaviours, such as punctuality, attendance, hard work etc. Nevertheless, you, your leaders, staff and students are clear that there needs to be still further improvement. Students say that their learning is still disrupted by poor behaviour in some lessons, and this was witnessed by inspectors. They say this happens particularly in lessons where the activities are not interesting enough, or where activities set are too hard or too easy.

Attendance has improved substantially so that it is now in line with the national average. This has been achieved through a focused drive to encourage students to attend more regularly by aligning the rewards system to attendance, but also through rigorous tracking of absence and rapid communication with parents.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Since my last visit, a number of external factors have come into play which have not been helpful to the school in making the progress required. The restructure of the senior leadership team took longer than expected, in part because of uncertainties about the future status of the school. Until very recently, you were working with a

potential sponsor in preparation for becoming an academy, as well as with the school commissioned by the local authority to provide support. On occasion, differing views of the most effective way to move the school forward have hampered rapid progress. Very recently, you have been informed that an alternative sponsor will now be identified. Consequently, some planned actions, including training for staff, have had to be reviewed.

Whilst the situation above partly explains the slower than expected progress made by the school, you, your leaders and governors are aware that too many significant actions have not yet been implemented or have not yet had the intended impact. You agree that a major factor is that teaching has not improved quickly or securely enough to effectively tackle the long-established underachievement of students. Training has been provided to address the issue through a two-tier approach, so that whole-school training has focused on key aspects for improvement from the Ofsted report. The main emphasis has been on improving formative assessment, which has been delivered as part of a carousel. Although all staff have now received training, some has been very recent. This means that the full impact is unlikely to be seen until next term. More focused training has been provided for middle leaders and for teachers who require improvement. However, this training has not yet led to significant gains in the quality of teaching.

With the introduction of an improved progress tracking system, you have been better able to identify underperformance and the causes of it. You are now using this information to analyse gaps in students' knowledge and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics. This has informed a review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, which has been redesigned for September to focus on the identified gaps. This should mean that potential problems are dealt with early and less reliance is placed on Year 11 interventions. In addition, a pilot 'catch up' programme in literacy and numeracy for a small number of students from Year 7 to Year 9 has been successful in increasing the progress for those targeted. It will now be rolled out more widely in September, with the intention of ensuring that these students will make better progress, more quickly. Clearly, it is not possible to say what effect these strategies will have on improving achievement, but you expect that they will support sustained long-term improvement.

The curriculum for Key Stage 4 has been reviewed and there will be more opportunities for students to access creative courses from September. Processes to monitor the progress of students attending alternative provision have been tightened up considerably, and these are now effective.

Currently, most provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is taking place in form time. You are intending to incorporate this provision in the wider curriculum from September. Identified training days have allocated planning time so that SMSC is clearly identified in all subjects. Consequently, leaders will have a clear view of what is happening where and when.

You have successfully recruited for two new key posts for September which are part of your strategic plan to improve achievement: a Skills School Director, who will focus on narrowing the gap for those students below Level 3 and for students who speak English as an additional language, and a director of special educational needs strategies.

The governing body has undertaken training to improve its ability to challenge school leaders. Governors know the school well and have a very clear understanding of where the school is now and where it needs to be. They agree that not enough progress has been made at this point.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide effective support and challenge to the school through regular Monitoring Task Force meetings. They have commissioned support for leadership and teaching from of a local outstanding teaching school. This is to be reviewed in the light of the later-than-expected conversion to academy status. Specific support from another teaching school to improve assessment and leadership in mathematics has had a positive impact.