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4 July 2014

Miss Gill Broom  
Headteacher  
Hameldon Community College  
Coal Clough Lane  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB11 5BT

Dear Miss Broom

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Hameldon Community College**

Following my visit to your school on 2 and 3 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 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 weakness designation.

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

Terry Holland

**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Eradicate the very small amount of inadequate teaching, and improve the overall quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all key stages, and especially in mathematics, in order that students achieve well by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan activities and teach lessons which consistently meet the needs of all students in each class, including challenging the most able learners
  - ensuring the students have more regular opportunities to respond to teachers' written comments, and so improve their work further
  - increasing the number of opportunities in all subjects for students to engage in extended talk and discussions so their skills in speaking to a range of audiences improve
  - building on the success of the literacy support programme and extending this fully to support those students, especially in Key Stage 3, who have weaknesses in numeracy
  - increasing the number of opportunities for students to apply their mathematical skills in situations that reflect real life and so help students to understand the practical use of mathematics in range of subjects
  - sharing more effectively the examples of good and outstanding practice that exists across the college.
  
- Improve attendance and behaviour so they are both at least good by:
  - planning work that is relevant and engaging to all students so that behaviour does not deteriorate causing students to be excluded, and that all students want to attend regularly, whatever their level of ability or background
  - strengthening further the work the college does with parents, particularly those parents of students who do not attend well
  - ensuring that all staff consistently apply the college's rewards and sanctions procedures, including those that relate to attendance.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers further by:
  - ensuring that subject leaders carefully check the quality of teaching and students' learning and progress in their area of responsibility, and challenge staff if students are not achieving their full potential
  - making sure that improvement plans have clear, specific and measurable milestones and include costing, so that those responsible for improvement tasks throughout the college can be held to account more robustly.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work and teaching in Key Stage 3 and Year 10. He visited seven lessons, including three mathematics classes. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or members of the senior leadership team. The inspector scrutinised documents including students' progress information, students' books, senior leaders' evaluations of the school's work and the school improvement plan. He also reviewed attendance and exclusion records. The inspector met with two groups of students, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the leaders for all major subject areas, including English, mathematics and science, the Chair of the Governing Body, one other member of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. He also observed in-service sessions for staff as part of the school's 'Minimum Good' and Middle Leaders training programmes.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection on 15 January 2014, the governors have formally resolved to seek academy status with a local sponsor (The Pennine Federation).

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

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear view of what needs to be done to improve learning at the school. Working with the help of the local authority and Haslingden High School, a successful local school led by a National Leader of Education (NLE), the headteacher and staff have continued to make rapid improvements in the areas identified by the section 5 inspection. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching have been embedded well and the quality of teaching has improved steadily. The small amount of inadequate teaching that existed at the time of the section 5 inspection has been eradicated. Rigorous monitoring and performance management, alongside the in-house 'Minimum Good' programme of training and support for all staff, have ensured the targets and the initial milestones set by the school to improve teaching and learning have been met. Almost all the teaching seen during this visit was good or better. Nonetheless, the college is aware that some teaching still requires improvement and that there continues to be inconsistency in the performance of some teachers. Leaders are clearly focused on the actions needed to raise the quality of all teaching to at least good.

Other actions and procedures in the school improvement plan (SIP) to address the areas for development identified by the section 5 inspection are now also firmly embedded. This is evident, for example, in the improvement in students' performance in mathematics demonstrated by the school's detailed tracking and progress data, and by inspection evidence. Subject leaders, well supported by senior

staff, are now increasingly confident in analysing the school's robust assessment data on students' progress. This has helped them, and other teachers, to improve their planning to ensure that students of all abilities are given work that challenges them so they can perform to the best of their abilities. Middle leaders, individually and collectively, are now taking responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and the moderation of students' work.

Attendance has risen steadily and is now slightly above the national average. Punctuality, however, remains a problem and the school has not reached its own targets for improvement. The number of exclusions has dramatically reduced, though it is still slightly higher than the ambitious targets set out in the SIP. The management of behaviour by most staff has also improved and the school's data show a substantial reduction in internal exclusions from classes. Students say that they have recognised that there is less low-level disruptive behaviour in their classes. They are very positive about the caring community and ethos of the school as a whole. Nonetheless, they still have concerns about the extent to which the attitudes and behaviour of some students, and the inconsistency in the way that behaviour is managed by a small number of staff, are still a distraction and have an impact on their learning in some lessons.

Closer attention to the learning requirements of the most able students has led to improvement in the overall performance of these students. The school's data indicate that this year's GCSE results should double the number of students achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades and that there will be an improvement in the proportion of higher grades achieved. If the predicted results are realised, the school should return to being well above the government's current floor targets and will be close to or in line with national averages for five A\* to C GCSE grades. However, while there is predicted improvement in the achievement of higher grades in a number of subjects, the school and the governing body are aware that the achievement of the most able students throughout the school needs further improvement and remains a clear target for the next stage of development.

The governing body continues to provide good support for the school. All governors are kept very well informed by the headteacher and senior leaders who have specific responsibility for areas of development in the SIP. Governors are fully represented on the standards and effectiveness committee (SEC) which monitors the school's progress against the challenging targets set in the improvement plan. They are rigorous in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's progress and hold all parties, including external providers, to account to assure that the necessary improvements are made. Governors are committed to ensuring the success of the school and to securing its long-term future. It is this desire that has underpinned their recent decision to seek academy status and to be proactive in assuring this is with a local sponsor.

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

- The headteacher, with the support of key senior staff, provides very strong leadership and this has enabled leaders throughout the school to grow in confidence and to press forward determinedly with their improvement programme. As a result, it is clear that students are making better progress than at the time of the section 5 inspection.
- As a result of both in-house and external support, improvements have been particularly marked in mathematics where stronger leadership and more effective teaching have enabled students to be more engaged with their learning and more confident in exploring ways to solve problems.
- The school's assessment information is detailed. The greater emphasis on individual students' progress has helped teachers to sharpen their focus on the performance of different groups of students, particularly those requiring specific support for their learning and behaviour, and those who are the most able. As a consequence, the performance of both these groups has begun to improve since the previous inspection.
- The leadership and management team has resolutely pursued improvements through frequent and consistent monitoring of teaching. This is now being extended to include the scrutiny of students' books both in subjects and across the school as a whole.
- The well-structured and highly effective in-house training programmes are leading to improved practice across the school.
- The 'Minimum Good' programme has been developed with, and delivered by, staff and middle leaders with highly effective practice in key aspects of teaching and learning. The sense of 'ownership' of this drive for improvement is palpable among the staff. The results are already evident in lessons seen, with improved and more consistent adjustment of learning tasks to meet the needs of students of differing abilities, higher expectations and challenge to students to achieve, and more opportunities for them to develop their oracy skills through extended answers.
- While the 'Minimum Good' programme is open to all staff, teachers whose teaching is less than good are directed to attend this training to help them to improve. Both the school's own records and local authority reviews of teaching confirm the impact of this support. Teaching generally is now better than it was. The joint lesson observations undertaken during this monitoring inspection confirmed the accuracy of the school's own judgements about the improving quality of teaching.
- The school's parallel programme of support for middle leaders has resulted in greater awareness of their leadership and management roles. There is now an enhanced culture of collective responsibility and accountability among subject leaders for the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and their contribution to the school's overall improvement.
- Students' work books show that marking is more focused and gives more opportunities for students to respond to teachers' comments on their work. This practice is still relatively new and evolving. The school is aware that it needs embedding to ensure that practice and impact are more consistent.

- Observations of lessons during this inspection, scrutiny of work books and discussions with students, show that ambitious targets are being set and regularly discussed with them. As a result, expectations of their performance and progress are higher.
- Behaviour is improving. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen substantially. Additionally, students report that, while disruptive behaviour has not been eradicated, they have noticed an improvement in behaviour in most lessons and around the school.
- In the midst of necessary change, the school has maintained its existing strengths in its inclusion, support and care for students. Students unanimously agreed that 'community' is not just part of the school's name; it sums up its ethos. As one Year 10 student, who joined the school with a very troubled history of behaviour and exclusion, put it, 'the school has changed my life and has changed me for the better'. Others wholeheartedly agreed with one younger student who, reflecting on recent developments, said 'the school makes you realise your potential and helps you achieve it'.

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

- Although students' progress and attainment overall is rising, the school and governors are aware that progress of the most able students and potential higher attainers still needs further improvement.
- Teaching is improving but the school is aware that the performance of some staff is still too variable. The very significant efforts made to support these staff need to result in the quality of teaching improving more consistently.
- In the work books seen, marking is now more helpful in making it clearer to students what they need to do to improve. However, there is still too much variability in teachers' checks that students have responded to this guidance and subsequently letting them know how well they have done.
- Students report inconsistencies in some teachers' expectations of their behaviour and application of the school's policy on behaviour. The planned introduction of behaviour plans, building on the good practice already evident in the work of the inclusion faculty, should provide clearer guidance on the management of these students and the basis for more rigorous challenge to staff who fail to apply procedures effectively.

### **External support**

The local authority provides excellent support for the school. The work of the school's link adviser in providing support to the senior leaders, in his monitoring and quality assurance to help strengthen teaching and learning, and his role as 'critical friend' to the SEC, has helped the school to make rapid improvements in its practices. The local authority has provided support and advice from its specialist advisers and consultants in areas such as mathematics, special educational needs, behaviour, human resources and finance. In addition, the local authority has provided funding for an external tutor and liaison with the University of Manchester to work alongside the school's in-house 'outstanding teacher' programme. The link

with the local school and the NLE has been brokered through the authority and has been effective in providing peer support for all subject leaders and particularly for the mathematics department. As a result, the school as a whole, and leaders at all levels, are now better able to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and to drive improvement forward.