

Serco Inspections  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 0121 679 9161  
**Direct email:** ann.morris@serco.com

Ms Sally Coulton  
Ellis Guilford School and Sports College  
Bar Lane  
Basford  
Nottingham  
NG6 0HT

Dear Ms Coulton

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Ellis Guilford School and Sports College**

Following my visit to your school on 6 November 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in November 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.

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

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - encouraging the school's good and outstanding teachers to be more creative and less formulaic in their planning, so that more lessons are fast-paced, exciting and interesting
  - rapidly building the skills of the less effective teachers so that they are able to apply some shared techniques more appropriately
  - ensuring that teachers plan different activities to match the needs of students as well as allowing for different outcomes in each lesson
  - making time for students to respond to teachers' marking by correcting work or extending their learning
  - ensuring that there is always enough challenge for the more-able students in each lesson.
  
- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, in science, for disadvantaged students and for more-able students in English.
  
- Further improve attendance and behaviour by:
  - developing more ways to encourage parents and students to work with the school to promote good attendance
  - ensuring that lessons and other activities offer greater interest and engagement to students
  - building better relationships between students and staff so that there is greater students involvement in improving behaviour
  - providing training for staff in a wider variety of approaches to prevent challenging behaviour from disturbing learning.
  
- Enhance the communication with and participation of parents so that they feel more involved and able to contribute to the improvement of the school.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 6 November 2014**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and the assistant headteacher with responsibility for reporting on achievement. I jointly observed parts of six lessons in science and mathematics with senior leaders. I also looked at a sample of students' work from Years 9 and 11 in English, science and mathematics. I scrutinised documentation, including the new school improvement plan and leaders' evaluation of the schools effectiveness. I looked at records relating to monitoring the quality of teaching and performance management, as well as the organisation of the curriculum mapping. I met with a representative from the local authority who is advising the school.

### **Context**

There have been a number of new appointments to the school since my last visit in May 2014. Eighteen new teachers have been appointed, including two heads of department for English and social studies; a lead teacher in the science department and a lead for alternative provision.

Leaders have established the 'Link', a new on-site specialist provision designed to support students who may be at risk of exclusion. A new house system has been established, with students choosing the names of each house based on local sporting teams. A new school uniform has also been adopted.

Five new appointments have been made to the governing body. These include representatives from the local authority, from the local further education college and from Nottingham University. There are currently three parent governor vacancies and the school has received a number of applications to fill these.

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

Leaders' drive for improvement is reaping benefits across many aspects of the school's work. While the proportion of students attaining five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, declined slightly this year, this was against a national fall in this headline measure. Consequently, the gap between achievement at the school and achievement nationally is narrowing overall. Achievement in English is a significant success. The proportion of students making expected progress is now in line with other students nationally and there are few gaps in the performance of different groups of students in this subject. Disadvantaged students made more progress than their peers in 2014.

However, achievement in mathematics was less positive and did not reach the predicted attainment and progress targets. Leaders have completed a thorough analysis of students' work on the examination papers and have identified

shortcomings in their use of calculators. Leaders have taken immediate action to ensure that current students do not make the same basic computational errors. Internal data is now collected on achievement in each year group and this shows that progress is improving in mathematics. However, further work needs to be done to ensure the accuracy of this information.

Achievement in science was weak in 2014, in some part owing to former decisions taken about students' choice of qualifications in this subject and to significant changes in staffing over the last 12 months. Leaders have now secured a full team of specialist science teachers which is starting to pay dividends in the progress current students are making. Leaders have worked with the local authority to conduct a full review of provision in science. This has identified some important factors that have limited students' achievements over time, such as in the availability of specialist equipment to support practical activities. They are investing in putting greater curriculum time and resources into science, although the impact of this is not yet evident.

Leaders continue to build a comprehensive picture of teachers' performance and support them with a range of tailored professional development programmes. They have successfully challenged inadequate teaching, and continue to offer an appropriate balance of support and challenge to weaker teachers. The quality of teaching is improving, and this includes in mathematics and science, subjects that have previously been a great concern. However, despite the clear vision of 'challenge for all', not all teachers have the skills or the understanding to ensure that this happens. Consequently, fewer students than should be the case are on track to achieve the highest grades at GCSE. Teachers are not using a range of effective assessment techniques to check whether students can be moved on to tackle more demanding work. For example, in mathematics, where some teachers limit students' opportunities by only planning work for a limited range of grades.

Leaders' work to improve attendance and behaviour has secured considerable improvements in these areas. Attendance continues to improve and leaders have realistically targeted this to be in line with the national average for the first time this year. The proportion of students who have received a fixed-term exclusion, although still double the national average, has fallen by 25% overall since last year. The school's current fixed term exclusion rate is below the national average. Leaders monitor behaviour closely and their systematic approach to analysing the information they collect on behaviour is excellent. This demonstrates that students' preparedness for learning and punctuality to lessons have improved and their relationships with staff are much more positive. There are far fewer incidences of students openly defying their teachers. Students agree with this analysis. They state that poor behaviour is not widespread but limited to a few individuals.

Governors are increasingly effective in providing challenge to senior leaders. The governing body has actively recruited new members with the skills needed to strengthen the effectiveness of governance. The executive committee meets monthly

and is able to hold senior leaders to account for their actions in improving the school.

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

- The headteacher and her senior team have the ambition, the skills and the drive to ensure that the school moves forward at pace. Their detailed analysis of all aspects of the school's work ensures that they have an accurate picture of current provision and a tightly focused plan for the next stage of improvement.

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

- The impact of subject leaders in driving improvement remains too inconsistent. Senior leaders are still having to work directly with departments to raise teachers' expectations about what good-quality teaching looks like.

### **External support**

The local authority advisers continue to provide effective support to the school. They have recently conducted in-depth reviews of behaviour and of provision in the science department. These have given leaders clear guidance in terms of establishing appropriate targets for improving attendance and reducing the number of exclusions. In addition, they have identified aspects of science provision that are acting as a barrier to improvement in this subject, such as resourcing for practical activities. This has better enabled leaders to move quickly to plan improvements in this area. Advisers are currently working with senior leaders to establish their plan for supporting the school throughout this academic year.