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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 March 2015 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 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 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. It is my recommendation that the next inspection of the school be carried out under the provision of section 5 of the Education Act.

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 exist 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 measureable milestones and include costings, so that those responsible for improvement tasks throughout the college can be held to account more robustly.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 2 March 2015

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, one other member of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. He observed two lessons jointly with members of the senior leadership team and met with a group of 'Lead Learners' from Years 9 and 10 (pupils who provide peer support to others in their lessons). The inspector scrutinised documents including data on students' achievement and progress, attendance and exclusion records, students' books and senior leaders' evaluations of the school's work.

Context

At the time of the last monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 July 2014, the governors had formally resolved to seek academy status with a local sponsor, the Pennine Federation. However, following due diligence, the Department for Education decided that this route was not possible due to the number of students on roll at the school. The local authority is continuing to support the school and to assure its sustainability. However, the resulting budget has necessitated reductions in staffing. Since the last monitoring inspection, five teachers have left the school and two new 'Teach First' trainees appointed.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The headteacher and senior leadership team continue to provide strong and effective leadership and management of the school. Students' achievement across the school continues to improve as a result. This was particularly evident, for example, in the 2014 GCSE results where the number of students achieving five or more A* to C grades (including English and mathematics) improved significantly and was just above the national average.

This is a considerable achievement. The progress these students made to achieve these results, given their starting points, placed the school fifth highest in comparison to schools in similar circumstances nationally. The prior attainment of these students was the second lowest among all the local authority's schools, yet it outperformed nearly two-thirds of those schools. Current data on attainment show continuing improvement and consolidation of the performance in English and mathematics. As a result, the school is on track to exceed most of its July 2015 targets. The progress made by disadvantaged students supported by specific government funding (the pupil premium) was better than similar students nationally. The gap between their attainment and those of their peers in the school is clearly closing. Nonetheless, the proportion of all students making more than expected progress remained below average and the achievement of the most able students throughout the school remains a clear target for further improvement.

The systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching are now well embedded and the quality of teaching has continued to improve. The small amount of inadequate teaching that existed at the time of the section 5 inspection was quickly eradicated. The school judges that eighty-eight per cent of teaching is currently good or better. Targets for the proportion of teaching judged to be outstanding have been met, but the movement of staff to other posts since the last monitoring inspection has, inevitably, affected that figure currently. Importantly, with the local authority's support, the school has developed criteria to help evaluate the impact of teaching on students' outcomes and achievement. This is already being used effectively to review the relative strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning across all subject areas, with improvements already evident.

Other actions and procedures to address the areas for development identified by the section 5 inspection are now also firmly embedded. Subject leaders, well supported by senior staff, are now confident in analysing the school's robust assessment data on students' progress. This has helped to ensure that students of all abilities are given work that challenges them and that they are actively encouraged to review their achievement and perform to the best of their abilities in lessons. Middle leaders, and especially curriculum leaders, are now taking responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and the moderation of students' work in their areas of responsibility and across the school as a whole. The consistency, quality and effectiveness of marking and feedback to students have improved as a result. Nonetheless, inspection evidence indicates that more still needs to be done to ensure that students are expected to respond to teachers' feedback in order to improve further.

Attendance has risen significantly since the last section 5 inspection and is now above the national average. Punctuality has improved, but remains a problem and the school continues to work hard with a small, but persistent, group of students and families who are hardest to motivate. Their efforts are having some effect. The number of exclusions has dramatically reduced, though they remain higher than the ambitious targets set by the school and above the national average. The management of behaviour by staff has improved overall. The school's data continue to show a reduction in internal exclusions from classes. Concerns raised by the last monitoring inspection over the consistency with which behaviour was managed by a small number of staff have been robustly addressed. Students continue to be very positive about the caring community and ethos of the school as a whole and are clear that they feel safe.

The governing body continues to provide good support for the school. Governors have been fully represented on the standards and effectiveness committee (SEC) that has monitored the school's progress against the challenging targets set in its improvement plan. They have been rigorous in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's progress and in holding all parties to account to assure that the necessary improvements have been made. Governors remain committed to ensuring the success of the school and to securing its long-term future. They have acted

robustly to address the school's continuing budget deficit and the need to restructure following the decision on prospective academy status.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Working with the help of the local authority and drawing on the support of Haslingden High School, a successful local school led by a National Leader of Education (NLE), the headteacher and staff have made sustained improvement in the areas identified by the section 5 inspection.
- Leaders throughout the school have grown in confidence and have pressed forward determinedly with the improvement programme. As a result, students are making significantly better progress than at the time of the section 5 inspection.
- 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.
- Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and senior leaders and through a regular programme of inputs by middle and curriculum leaders on the performance of their areas of responsibility.
- The school's assessment information is detailed. The greater emphasis on individual students' progress has helped teachers to set learning targets that challenge and stretch students more effectively. As a result, students' expectations of their performance and progress are higher.
- This tracking of individual students' progress, alongside clear and helpful analyses of specific students' difficulties and learning needs by the inclusion faculty, has resulted in the performance of these students improving very significantly since the section 5 inspection.
- The programme of support for middle leaders has resulted in greater awareness of their leadership and management roles, their accountability for the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and of their contribution to the school's overall performance and improvement.
- The clear focus and consistent efforts to improve attendance and behaviour have borne fruit. Attendance and behaviour have been improved.
- The school has maintained its existing strengths in its inclusion, support and care for students. It is now more successful in assuring that these students can also achieve to the best of their abilities and maximise their future opportunities and chances in life.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Although students' progress and attainment overall has risen, the school and governors are aware that the progress of the most able students and potential higher attainers still needs further improvement.
- Marking is now more helpful in making it clearer to students what they need to do to improve. However, the school is aware that teachers still need to encourage students to respond to this guidance and check this has occurred.

External support

The local authority has provided excellent support for the school: both in helping to drive improvement forward and in providing the stability needed for the school to feel confident of its continuing existence and sustainability. 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 improve its practice and performance in key respects. The local authority has provided effective support and advice from its specialist advisers and consultants over the last 18 months. In addition, the link with the local school and the NLE brokered through the authority has been effective in providing peer support for subject leaders, particularly for the mathematics and science departments. As a result, the school as a whole, and leaders at all levels, have been able to achieve the improvement evident since the previous section 5 inspection.