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19 March 2015

Mrs J Collins  
Headteacher  
Lindsworth School  
Monyhull Hall Road  
Kings Norton  
Birmingham  
B30 3QA

Dear Mrs Collins

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Lindsworth School**

Following my visit with Simon Mosley, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Phil Harrison, Associate Inspector, to your school on 17–18 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 which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014. 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 making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher only after consultation with HMI 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  
Sue Morris-King HMI

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement by:
  - eradicating the pockets of inadequate teaching
  - tackling staffing issues to enable students to have the maximum continuity in their learning
  - ensuring that all staff, including teaching assistants and mentors, have equally high expectations of what students can achieve and communicate these clearly in each lesson
  - helping students to develop, and then use, their literacy skills in every lesson, not just in English lessons
  - deciding on what is required from teachers' marking and ensuring that all teachers implement this consistently
  - making sure that students' progress is assessed regularly and consistently across all subject areas.
  
- Improve behaviour by:
  - ensuring that all staff have consistently high expectations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in every lesson and quickly challenge poor behaviour so it does not deteriorate
  - giving staff training and support to manage the more complex and challenging behaviours that some students present.
  
- Improve attendance by:
  - ensuring that the attendance of all students is accurately recorded
  - improving the process for recording and reporting the attendance of students at alternative provision
  - reducing the use of part-time timetables
  - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all staff responsible for attendance and ensuring that these are carried out effectively.
  
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the headteacher and senior and middle leaders gain a clear overview of where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie and take action accordingly
  - every member of staff's roles and responsibilities are clear and the effectiveness with which they carry these out are properly monitored

- all the actions that are being taken to improve the school's work are properly evaluated to assess their impact and the evaluation is used to plan the next steps
- governors take full account of this evaluation and use this to provide an appropriate level of challenge as well as support
- the school and the local authority work closely together to plan how to manage the change in numbers on roll and the related budget deficit efficiently and effectively, in particular so the school is appropriately staffed to enable students to make progress.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 17–18 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, the pastoral leader, staff, the Chair and a member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and two representatives of the local authority. Inspectors visited three off-site providers used by the school and observed a meeting attended by a range of professionals who work with the school. Inspectors held informal discussions with students and staff throughout the inspection.

### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection a staffing restructure has taken place which has led to seven teachers, seven support staff and five administrative staff leaving the school. One assistant headteacher also left her post at the end of the end of the autumn term but is still teaching English and providing some support to teachers on a part-time basis. Since the start of this term, five teachers and eight other members of staff have joined the school. A new assistant headteacher and three other teachers have been appointed to join the school in the summer term, which will leave only one vacancy.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The school's tracking information, based on the outcomes from mock examinations and coursework assessments, indicates that current Year 11 students are on track to attain better results than last year's Year 11 students in their GCSE examinations. Where Year 11 students continue to underachieve, this is very often because of their poor attendance, although some students' progress has also been adversely affected by the gaps in staffing. The school is aware of the need to ensure that all the Year 11 students attend school and any alternative provision placements as well as possible between now and the examination period, as well as attending the examinations themselves, so that these positive predictions come to fruition.

Many Year 10 students are making steady progress in their GCSE courses, although again the progress of some has been affected by gaps in staffing and low attendance. Some examples of Year 10 students making good progress over time were seen during the inspection. For example, a set of English books showed that each student in the groups is producing a good volume of well-presented, accurate and sometimes thoughtful work, and developing their skills and knowledge well.

Year 9 students' progress is patchy. The school's assessment information indicates that too many continue to underachieve, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

Year 7 and 8 students, who are now taught as 'lower school' in a separate building from the older students, have settled well into their new location and routines. Their greatly improved attendance is enabling them to experience more continuity in their learning, and this is having a positive impact on the progress they are making. In lessons, many students made steady progress, which was reflected in their work and in the schools' own assessment information.

### **The quality of teaching**

In most of the lessons visited during the inspection there was a clear focus on learning. Where silly or disruptive behaviour threatened to interfere, staff usually calmly refocused students. Support staff were often skilled at redirecting students to their learning, by using relevant questions that helped them to think and respond.

In the best examples teachers encouraged students to articulate their thinking, explain their reasoning, or consider what they needed to do next. Teachers and support staff encouraged students to work independently and to think for themselves, even where they were reticent. For example, students in a science lesson developed their confidence and skills when pouring and measuring acid independently as part of an experiment. In these lessons teachers deployed support staff carefully to help to meet students' needs.

At other times, teachers did too much for students or did not give students enough time to work things out for themselves. Occasionally too little was expected of students, both in terms of their behaviour and their work rate, or they were given tasks to do that did not lead to much learning. At times, students were held back in their learning because teachers did not make clear what they expected from them or how to go about their work.

Students' books have now been laminated. This is ensuring that they are free from graffiti and helping students to take a pride in their work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

As reported at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, behaviour around the school during the two days of the inspection was largely calm. At break times, students organised themselves to play football or indoor games. Supervision at lunchtime was appropriate but not overbearing, and students had purposeful activities to take part in. Students mainly behaved sensibly. At the end of lunchtime students immediately stopped their activities when asked to do so by staff. Students are all clear that they must not smoke on the school site and the vast majority now

comply. Staff remind students about this requirement clearly during break and lunchtimes.

Among the younger students, attitudes to learning have noticeably improved. Many work hard for the whole of each lesson, respond well to instructions from staff and show a pride in their work. Similarly positive attitudes are also evident among some of the older students, but this is not yet consistent. Some older students do not arrive punctually to their lessons. Nevertheless, some older students were keen to ensure that their peers did not let the school down during the inspection, for example reminding others to get on with their work or to be polite. This indicates their growing loyalty to the school. The increasingly good, well-focused support provided by the pastoral and learning support staff is helping students to be more resilient and to see the value of learning. Pastoral managers continue to be active and effective in supporting students to attend lessons and to behave well over time.

Almost all students wear full school uniform. Staff are now providing students with good role models by dressing professionally.

The use of physical intervention is now infrequent. This is a significant achievement for the school given its high use a year ago. This term leaders decided to take a firm stance on physical damage to school property. This led to a slight rise in the use of exclusion. Importantly, however, exclusion for this reason is followed by a meeting with parents and carers, and another between the student and a police officer who is working closely with the school, in order to emphasise to students the seriousness of their behaviour. This strategy is having a positive impact, with few students repeating their misbehaviour.

Overall attendance remains very low. There is a core of students whose attendance remains exceptionally low, and who do not respond to any of the strategies the school employs to promote their attendance. Year 11 students have the lowest attendance, which has a negative impact on their achievement. However all the school's efforts are starting to pay dividends with many students. Year 7 and 8 students' attendance has risen considerably and is nearly at 90%. This term, students in other year groups have also responded well, with 37 students in total reaching 90% attendance during this half term. There is a range of examples of individual students whose attendance has improved considerably following intervention, sometimes from a very low baseline.

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

Despite continued staffing shortages and a vacancy in the senior leadership team, leaders and staff have worked effectively together to ensure that the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection.

The headteacher has fully implemented the new staffing structure. The introduction of the pastoral and learning support posts has given support staff a clear understanding of their roles. This has placed the emphasis firmly on facilitating learning alongside supporting students with their social, emotional and behavioural needs. New substantive appointments have been made to almost all teaching and support posts and the school anticipates being almost fully staffed by the summer term.

A new behaviour management structure has been introduced following consultation with staff. This is well thought-out and, although new, was observed being used by many staff during the inspection. The analysis of both behaviour and attendance information is thorough and rigorous and is used very well to target interventions and actions according to what it is showing. Procedures for monitoring attendance on a daily basis are secure. Some intensive work with families is helping to raise attendance.

The school has put in place several new strategies to help to improve students' literacy skills. The 'DEAR' initiative – 'drop everything and read' – involves everyone in the lower school, including staff, reading for twenty minutes each day. New books have been purchased to capture students' interest. Reading intervention has been introduced for selected students. Key subject vocabulary and literacy targets are being used more widely than previously. These strategies are too new to have had any noticeable impact.

The oversight of alternative provision has improved. A member of staff now takes responsibility for day-to-day liaison with providers, and for checking that students are attending and succeeding. The school has not yet carried out a full audit of the suitability and quality of each of the providers it uses.

Leaders have placed a clear emphasis on the importance of planning and teaching interesting, appropriate lessons and managing behaviour well. Training and support have focused on these aspects. They now rightly intend to tailor the support for teachers more closely to their needs to ensure that teaching and achievement continue to improve at the necessary rate.

The IEB members are well-focused and effective. They have paid close attention to the areas for improvement raised at the previous monitoring inspection. The close focus on behaviour and attendance has held the school to account while also providing good practical support and recognition of what has been achieved. IEB members have a realistic view of the improvements in the school and the areas that still need to develop, partly through their visits to the school. They are aware of the need to focus closely on the quality of teaching in the coming term to check if achievement is improving fast enough. Relationships with the local authority continue to be positive.

## External support

The local authority continues to provide a range of suitable support for the school, which is responsive to the school's needs. A recent review of achievement and the quality of teaching was accurate and useful. The multi-agency meeting has begun to function well and is providing a good forum in which to solve complex issues that arise with some students and to allocate resources accordingly. The local authority is supporting the school with finance and staffing issues as needed.

The post-inspection letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:  
[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)