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20 March 2015

Mrs J Pitman  
Testwood Sports College  
Testwood Lane  
Totton  
Southampton  
SO40 3ZW

Dear Mrs Pitman

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Testwood Sports College**

Following my visit with Victor Chaffey, Additional inspector, to your academy on 17 and 18 March, 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 academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 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 academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The academy's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection after discussion with me about the subject area and the support that will be provided.

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 Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching so that a high proportion is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - teachers track the progress of students frequently, accurately and in sufficient depth to enable them to plan lessons that ensure students make rapid progress from their starting points
  - expectations, and consequently achievement targets, are consistently high and teachers provide suitable opportunities for students to challenge themselves and to develop confidence in learning how to make decisions for themselves about how to improve their work
  - all teachers give detailed written feedback frequently to their students and then ensure that recommended improvements are carried out
  - teachers prepare students properly for examinations so that all achieve well, including those supported by extra funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Raise levels of achievement in GCSE examinations, especially in English, so that standards are at least in line with national averages.
- Review, evaluate and improve the provision made to support students eligible for pupil premium funding so that the gaps between their achievement and that of others close.
- Ensure that incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively by all members of staff.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
  - there is rigour and precision in the evaluation of college policies, strategies and initiatives
  - the results of evaluation are used to improve provision and, as a consequence, achievement
  - assessment data are accurate and are used effectively to promote students' progress
  - strategies already in place to improve teaching and learning are embedded and extended.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 March 2015**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of students, a group of staff, members of the governing body, and the executive headteacher of The Arnewood School which provides support. Inspectors observed 25 lessons over two days, the majority of which on the first day were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of students' work alongside senior leaders. On two occasions, inspectors made short visits to lessons to observe behaviour. All areas for improvement were focused upon but particular attention was given to leadership and management.

### **Context**

Two new deputy headteachers, both of whom teach science, and a new head of music have been appointed and are due to take up their posts after Easter 2015. In January 2015, the academy changed the way students were grouped in Key Stage 3. Students are now placed either in a group based on their ability in that subject or, for some humanities and more practical subjects, in a mixed ability group. One member of the science department has been on long-term absence and one science teacher is on maternity-leave.

### **Achievement of students at the academy**

Since the last monitoring inspection, validated results for 2014 examinations have been published. These show that there was a big improvement in the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics. There was also a significant rise in English GCSE results when compared with 2013, less so in mathematics. The progress that students made in English from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 rose dramatically in 2014 and was well above average. The progress students made in mathematics rose less significantly but improved so it was in line with national averages. The gap in progress between those eligible for additional pupil premium funding and other students narrowed in both English and mathematics GCSE. However, the overall gap in attainment between those students eligible for additional funding achieving five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics and others did not narrow enough and remained wide. You have detailed plans in place to ensure this gap is more significantly narrowed in 2015.

Predictions for 2015 are more robust than last year as they are based on students' performance in tests and mock examination papers. Current Year 11 students started with lower Key Stage 2 results than students who took their examinations in 2014. The academy has set challenging targets for their achievement. The information provided shows that students are more likely to achieve their targets in

English than in mathematics. The mathematics subject leader has rightly ensured targeted students can access extra lessons on how best to tackle examination papers.

The academy's own information shows that the gap in achievement between those eligible for additional funding and others continues to close. Across Key Stages 3 and 4, the academy's tracking indicates the gap is closing more rapidly in English than in mathematics. The tracking also indicates that students make better progress in mathematics, English and a number of other subjects in Years 8 and 9 than in Year 7. In some Year 7 lessons, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve remain too low.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching in most subjects has improved since the last monitoring visit. In these subjects, teachers are now using information from students' assessments to identify those who need extra help in lessons to catch up. Teachers often target these students for further questioning and carefully check their progress throughout the lesson. For example, in Year 11 lessons, teachers target students to answer questions in front of the class and highlight the phrases students have used in their answers that will lead to success in GCSE examinations. In this way, expertise about how to achieve a good grade is shared effectively. As a result, Year 11 students are making better progress in most subjects. Students told inspectors that they feel better supported by their teachers.

However, students do not always make as much progress as they could, particularly in science and some Key Stage 3 lessons. This is because in these lessons teachers are not using data from their assessments of students' work to plan tasks that challenge all students. In a Year 7 English lesson, for example, students were looking at an extract from *Twelfth Night* to find out more about Shakespeare's language. The task set focused on the definition of words rather than exploring the impact of Shakespeare's powerful language and imagery. The less able did not make progress because they did not have enough guidance to complete the task. The more able were not given the opportunity to develop the more complex analytical skills needed to achieve a higher level. Some more-able students told inspectors that since the changes to their groups, the level of challenge in the work teachers set has dropped.

Teachers adhere to the new marking policy well and books are marked regularly. The presentation of students' work is now better. In many lessons teachers ensure that students refer back to guidance and suggested next steps. Students successfully use the advice to guide them when they are completing tasks independently. Teachers now ask students to complete follow-up tasks and respond to the questions they set at the end of marked work. In mathematics, teachers carefully plan the follow-up tasks which help students make better progress. Some teachers

set follow-up tasks or pose questions that are too easy, which means students' progress is slower.

### **Behaviour and safety of students**

Following the last monitoring visit, the headteacher sensibly sought external advice on how best to manage behaviour. Consequently, a new, more rigorous approach to managing students' behaviour in lessons has been introduced. Students who repeatedly disrupt their own learning and that of others are given an appropriate sanction. Students are now clearer about expectations of good behaviour as a result, there is less disruption in most, but not all, lessons. A contributory factor to improvements has been the change in the way students are grouped in Key Stage 3. Students' attitudes to learning are becoming more positive because many teachers have higher expectations of students' conduct in these new groups. However in a small number of lessons, when the work is either too hard or too easy, or when teachers do not provide enough guidance on how to complete the task set, some students become disengaged. When this happens, teachers do not always employ the academy-wide guidance for managing behaviour effectively enough.

The academy has successfully reduced the number of incidents of poor behaviour outside of lessons. Some students and staff commented that there remain a very small number of visible students for whom the sanctions in place are not yet working effectively. However, inspectors did not see any incidents of poor behaviour outside of lesson time during their visit. The academy has robust plans to ensure the behaviour of this small group of students improves rapidly.

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

The headteacher has successfully improved the skills of her senior leadership team. Her drive, ambition and determination to move the school forward is now shared by all the senior leaders. They are demonstrably more effective and have introduced major improvements that are having a positive impact on students' achievement. The deputy headteacher has ensured that teachers use specially designed assessment tasks to gain a more accurate view of how well students are performing. The data from these assessments are used in the new system for tracking students' progress, which is now fully functional. Senior leaders are analysing information provided by the system with increased rigour. In regular meetings they hold subject leaders to account for the progress students make towards challenging targets.

Leaders have introduced a rigorous four-weekly cycle of monitoring activities. As part of this, senior and middle leaders survey students' views, observe lessons and scrutinise students' books. As a result, leaders have a very detailed picture of where strengths and weaknesses lie. This underpins their plans for further improvements. Senior leaders now also use this information to evaluate their own effectiveness. Subject leaders use the results of their monitoring to hold the teachers in their

departments to account and ensure improvements are made. Senior leaders keep a close eye on how rigorously subject leaders ensure that suggested follow-up actions are implemented. As a result, teaching is improving in most areas except science.

Leaders have changed the groups in which students are taught in Key Stage 3. The new approach is more flexible. Those students who had been originally placed in the lower band, 'development group', for all their subjects are challenged more in their new groups. Leaders check that teachers are using information from assessments to plan work that stretches all students. However, this is not yet consistent across subjects and year groups.

Governors have now implemented most of the recommendations from the review of governance carried out in November 2014. In doing so, they have benefited from the support of a National Leader of Governance. The governing body is now split into committees which sensibly focus on key aspects of the academy's performance. Consequently, governors now understand the academy's strengths and weaknesses more fully and discuss them incisively at meetings. They ask leaders to account for the progress and impact of new approaches. For example, they asked leaders to improve the academy's report on pupil premium funding so it included information on the funding's impact on students' achievement. Governors have focused their attention on scrutinising students' progress in Key Stage 4. There are well-laid plans for them to use the information provided about students' progress in Key Stage 3 to hold the academy to account.

### **External support**

The Arnewood School has worked closely with the academy, providing well-planned support in mathematics, science and technology. For the most part this has been successful, except in science where it has been less effective. The Arnewood School has agreed to provide further support in science. The headteacher has rightly continued the policy of using other partners to offer bespoke training. A good example is the effective use of a behaviour consultant to review behaviour and support the school in developing its new policy. The headteacher has ensured that leaders have visited other local good and outstanding schools to build their expertise. These visits have effectively raised leaders' expectations of themselves, teachers and students.