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24 April 2015

Headteacher  
Ms L Croke  
Hamble Community Sports College  
Satchell Lane  
Hamble-le-Rice  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
SO31 4NE

Dear Ms Croke

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hamble Community Sports College**

Following my visit to your school on 27 April 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure the good strategies in the action plans make a real difference by frequently checking that changes are happening in classrooms, and monitoring the difference they are making
- align the work of governors with the oversight provided by the new local authority strategy group
- extend the action plan to address the legacy of underperformance in Year 11, to Year 10 students.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's improvement planning was evaluated.

## **Context**

The previous headteacher left the school around the time of the previous inspection. The local authority appointed an experienced local headteacher to work with the senior team to oversee the school in the spring term. You were appointed as the new substantial headteacher and took up post this term.

## **Main findings**

Despite having been in post only two weeks, you demonstrate a keen understanding of the issues to be addressed, and you have already played a significant part in establishing a detailed strategy to improve all aspects of the school's work. You have an obvious commitment to Hamble Community Sports College becoming a good school, and you have begun work energetically and with a strong sense of purpose. I was particularly impressed by the detailed evaluation document you presented to governors in your first week here. In order to obtain such a good knowledge of the school in such a short time, you have already worked well with the senior team, capitalised on your previous successful experience as a headteacher, and used what you learned during the days you spent in the school last term.

Development planning is detailed and focused on the correct issues, and plans contain useful information about deadlines and how progress will be measured. However, there is a risk of the key priorities being lost in the wealth of detail they contain. You are aware of this and have plans to develop a set of short statements which pin your vision down, and enable all members of the school community to obtain a clear sense of 'how things are done at Hamble' from now on.

You and senior staff are in no doubt that the students whose achievements need to improve most are those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The extent of the difference between their and other students' examination results in 2014 took the school by surprise. You and your senior team have already put in place a raft of measures to address this urgent need, and there are more responses planned for this term. These include making some key appointments and reassigning current responsibilities to focus on driving up the achievement of disadvantaged students. These responses are based on the outcomes of the review of the use of the Pupil Premium grant, already undertaken, and on advice from the local authority. We agreed that the best way to ensure the impact of all of this work, and plans to improve literacy and numeracy across the school, is to convey clear messages to

staff, and then to check that the agreed strategies are being carried out by monitoring lessons and scrutinising students' work frequently.

Changes to the curriculum for September 2015 are being implemented. They have the capacity to strengthen achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Ensuring that there is a better match between individual students' skills and interests and their Key Stage 4 option choices should also serve to ensure that more students enjoy and benefit from their examination courses.

Plans to make more personalised responses to individual students' slower progress are innovative and interesting. The school's recent work with a consultant attached to a local special school is beginning to broaden the range of strategies teachers use to address underperformance and behaviour problems.

The school made rapid and effective responses in the spring term to the need to improve training for teachers and plans are based appropriately on the recommendations in the previous inspection report. Local authority support for this work has already been arranged.

The school's systems to track the achievement of students in each subject have been improved. A new system has been introduced and some training undertaken already. I agree with your sense that further improvements are necessary in the way that performance data are used with staff, so that teachers use the information more effectively to plan their teaching, as well as be held to account. Senior staff have recognised the need to accelerate the achievement of students currently in Year 11 in the lead-up to their examinations and there are plans to extend special provision to students in Year 10 to ensure that they achieve well in 2016.

Governors are well aware of the significance of the school being judged as requiring improvement a second time. They are keen to move quickly and to support you and your senior staff to make rapid improvements. Governors have strengthened the quality of their challenge to the school, and have undertaken a skills audit and undertaking a change to their structure. They have plans to work with an experienced governor from another school, and a national leader in governance. It is unclear how governors' work will mesh with the new regular strategy group meetings organised by the local authority and some clarity is needed about this.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school continues to receive very good support from the local authority. The school improvement manager (who is also your leading learning partner) provides excellent advice and guidance for you and your senior team. In the period between the previous headteacher leaving and your taking up post, the local authority

brokered oversight from an experienced headteacher from a local school for part of each week. She worked well with your senior team, and between them they helped the school to respond to the need to accelerate improvements, but maintain stability in its day-to-day work.

The local authority has agreed subject-specific support in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and religious education. There will also be further training for governors. This is a substantial package of assistance. The impact of this provision, and all aspects of the school's improvement work, will be overseen by the new strategy group put in place by the local authority's area manager. This is a group with a usefully wide range of experience and expertise.

In addition, you have organised specialist financial support for five days over this term to refine budgeting procedures, assist with planning the 2015/6 budget and help with the appointment of a new bursar. You have also organised a national lead governor to support the work of governors.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**