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Mr D Binnie
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Binnie

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STREETLY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 June 2005 with my colleague Janet Mills, Additional Inspector, I write to confirm the findings and to notify you of the outcomes.

As you know, the inspection was part of a policy involving a broader series of visits by HMI and Additional Inspectors to check on the development and improvement of schools which have been designated by their section 10 inspection as having serious weaknesses. You will recall that the focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan and removing the causes of the serious weaknesses.

During the visit we inspected 20 lessons or part lessons; attended two registration periods and a plenary session at the end of the day; scrutinised a wide range of documentation provided by the school; and held discussions with you and nominated staff on the areas for improvement identified in the section 10 inspection. We also examined a range of pupils' work and spoke informally with other staff and pupils.

On the basis of the evidence gathered during the visit, we made the following observations to you, the vice-chair of governors, and two representatives of Education Walsall.

The school became a sports college in 2003. A large number of staff were appointed to the school in that year with the effect that nearly 40 per cent were new. In addition, some long-term absences by staff in recent years have had a negative effect on standards. A new head of English is now in place and the new

head of science started at the school in September 2004. At the time of this visit, Year 11 students were undergoing national examinations.

The results of the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9 indicated that standards in English, mathematics and science overall were a little above the national average. They also revealed that the achievement of all the pupils was satisfactory overall. The results improved on those of the previous year. The results of the GCSE examinations showed unsatisfactory achievement. Girls achieved satisfactorily but the boys did not. Their achievement was poor, especially in English and science. The inspection judged that by Year 11 standards were rising in most subjects but were slightly below average overall. Examination results had improved significantly on the 2003 figures but were still below the national average for the percentage of pupils attaining five GCSE passes at grades A* to C. The main weakness was in the quality of teaching which was judged to be unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

The school's assessments and the observations made during the inspection indicate that attainment is rising in Key Stage 4. The school is likely to reach its 2005 targets for the percentage of GCSE passes and the percentage of passes at grades A* to C is likely to be close to the national average. In addition, the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is narrowing.

The school has provided a wide range of interventions to help pupils improve and raise attainment generally. Groups of pupils needing support have been identified through the school's 'traffic light' systems for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. This helps staff to identify those who are not on target to reach expected grades or levels. Marking has improved in both English and science but is still variable. A backlog of unsatisfactory work remains in some pupils' workbooks with pupils' work staying incomplete.

Pupils' attitudes were satisfactory or better in 19 of the 20 lessons. They were good or better in nine but in no lessons were they very good. Attitudes were positive when pupils were challenged to think and activities were interesting and stimulating. Most pupils got down to work quickly. In one lesson the pupils' attitudes were unsatisfactory. A small number of boys were talking off task and paying little interest. They did little work and were not challenged to work harder and pay attention.

The pupils' behaviour around the school was generally satisfactory. The pupils generally moved swiftly to lessons and the school's 'preparation for moving' bell has helped at the start of lessons at beginning of the day, after break and lunchtime. However, a few pupils still arrive a lot later than the majority of the class during the first lesson.

The school has instigated a number of measures to improve pupils' behaviour but there is no formal facility for pupils who, because of the need to calm down and reflect on their difficulties, need time away from the classroom during the day.

Detention is having a positive effect, however. Analysis of the figures taken since detention has occurred on the same day as a misdemeanour has shown a significant drop in behavioural incidents. Sanctions and rewards are generally clear to pupils and staff use the staged process adequately, although some short-circuit this. The number of external exclusions has reduced significantly since the beginning of term compared with the same period last year. The main impact has been to reduce significantly the level of repeat offences.

The management of attendance and punctuality has improved since the inspection. The school has analysed patterns of absence by gender, year and postcode, and has begun to intervene strategically. 'Traffic light' systems for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of individuals have been introduced and developed, with a view to integrating them with the systems already used to monitor achievement. The targets set for individual punctuality and attendance are demanding. Excellent attendance and punctuality by individuals and by forms, and improvement in the attendance and punctuality of individuals are rewarded. The information available from electronic registration is now used more effectively. Any staff who do not take their electronic registers promptly receive feedback. Pupils who arrive late at school automatically complete a ten-minute catch-up at the end of that day. First day calling is to be introduced strategically from September. Punctuality to school has risen from 95 per cent at the time of the section 10 inspection, to 97 per cent now, although the higher figure is based on a more demanding protocol. Attendance has fallen slightly from 92.9 per cent to 92.2 per cent during the same period. While this fall may be partly due to a seasonal effect, attendance remains too low.

The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in 16 of the 20 lessons; in five lessons it was good. In four lessons, the teaching was unsatisfactory. Two of these lessons were by teachers who will not be returning to the school in September and whom the school has rightly identified as needing much support. There were no lessons where the teaching was judged to be very good or better. Teachers are working hard to implement the guidance given and this is clearly evident in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers planned three levels of skill or knowledge for the different ability groups in the class to achieve. However, not all teachers specifically target work in this way. Staff are, however, mostly vigilant in identifying what pupils must do to reach certain levels and how they can achieve above average performance. There was no use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning in any of the lessons seen and visual aids used in demonstration at the beginning of lessons were sometimes far too small for all pupils to easily see.

Some teachers used interesting activities and devices to grab the pupils' attention and, overall, a reasonable range of methods was used to help pupils learn. Occasionally, lessons were dominated by the teacher's exposition. Most teachers recapped on the pupils' previous learning and identified what they were to do and learn in lessons. Teachers made good use of questioning techniques which helped the pupils expand their thinking and challenged higher attaining pupils in this way;

well-timed interventions checked the pupils' understanding and helped them learn effectively. Attention to timings in lessons helped to maintain an adequate pace and gave pupils targets to work towards. Although most identified the pupils who had difficulties learning or who were gifted and talented, often nothing additional was provided for them.

Where lessons moved along at a lively pace a variety of well chosen activities kept up the momentum and engaged the pupils' enthusiasm. Plenary sessions were reasonable, although some were very short and not always used to assess the pupils' learning. The pupils' presentation skills varied enormously and were not helped by the staff's poorly drawn diagrams of tables on the board. Few teachers made any comment about the quality of presentation of pupils' work during lessons. In the small number of lessons where teaching assistants were present, their support was effective. They were clear on what to do and used their initiative well. They ensured that pupils were on task and helped pupils to learn.

Sensitive teaching of the pupils with learning difficulties was seen in English. These pupils were achieving well through the effective support they were given and good attention to targets in their individual education plans. Although there was good use of small group pupil discussion in science, there was little opportunity for this in English or for any collaborative work.

The school's focus, rightly, has been on eradicating the unsatisfactory teaching and the cause of underachievement in Key Stage 4. However, there still needs to be a similar focus on raising satisfactory teaching to good teaching, and good teaching to very good.

The curriculum planning has been adapted to make activities and opportunities more attractive to boys. Some revisions are still being made in science but, nevertheless, the school is working hard to address the weaknesses and improve the achievement of all pupils, including boys. In a bid to improve the quality of teaching the school has introduced a 'buddying' system, whereby teachers with identified weaknesses in teaching are supported by others in a partnership arrangement. This has had a positive effect and the school's monitoring and support are beginning to bring about improvement in teaching. The advice and ideas given are being clearly reflected in teaching, although some staff are at an early stage of developing these in their own practice. Most of the staff in the science department, for instance, now relate the aspects that the pupils are learning to everyday events, past and present. This interests the pupils well.

The school has been adequately led and managed by the headteacher and the senior management team. Members of the team have responded positively to the challenge thrust upon them and have been well supported by Education Walsall personnel. The senior management team has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of provision and to ensure that all staff work together towards clearly expressed, common goals.

Effective monitoring is now taking place at the senior management level and this has had a positive effect on the work of middle managers. Subject leaders are beginning to take fuller responsibility for pupils' standards and the quality of provision in their subjects. Paired observations have aided the accuracy of staff's judgements about teaching and have provided good feedback on which to base improvement. Targets are set for individual teachers.

Education Walsall has worked with staff in both the English and science departments in order to eradicate unsatisfactory practice. The leadership and management of both departments are satisfactory. Individual teachers working with both heads of departments have led initiatives to improve the curriculum and to encourage staff to use a wide range of activities and resources which interest boys.

The action plan is satisfactory overall. A reasonable range of actions has been identified to help the school move forward. The action plan has been revised a number of times as a result of guidance from Education Walsall and its implementation monitored satisfactorily. Helpful advice has been given in relation to improving the plan. There are generally clear lines of responsibility and delegation. However, the criteria for the success of actions are not always clear and at times, 'ongoing' is used when specific timescales should be identified. Staff clearly 'own' the plan and are working hard to ensure its success. The lack of prominence in improving ICT and its use across the curriculum in both the school development plan and action plan is a weakness.

A satisfactory, detailed commentary has been provided by Education Walsall and the action plan provided by the education department identifies a good range of ways it will be helping the school to achieve its goals.

Action taken to address the areas for improvement

1: raise results in GCSE examinations so that they represent at least satisfactory achievement

Progress in addressing this issue has been reasonable. Attainment is rising and the school is on track to reach its targets. Initiatives at Key Stage 4 are having a reasonable success in improving pupils' achievement.

2: raise standards and improve teaching and learning in English and science in Years 10 and 11

Progress in addressing this issue has been reasonable. Year 11 pupils were not taught during the visit but evidence also suggests that standards should rise this year. In science standards are rising slowly and Year 11 predictions indicate that the pupils are unlikely to reach average standards. However, the gap between boys' and girls' achievement in both subjects is narrowing.

3: improve the management of behaviour, attendance and punctuality

Progress in addressing this issue has been reasonable. This has been discussed in the main part of the letter.

4: to meet statutory requirements:

- **make provision for a daily act of collective worship for all students**
- **provide religious education for students in Years 12 and 13**

Progress in addressing this issue has been reasonable. The school has planned to introduce religious education into the curriculum for all sixth formers from September 2005. It has also increased the priority given to reflection on the thought for the day during daily tutor time, but has not made provision for a specific daily act of collective worship for all students.

Reasonable progress has been made in implementing the action plan and removing the causes of the school's serious weaknesses.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and Education Walsall. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

GEORGE DERBY
Additional Inspector

cc chair of governors
Education Walsall
LEA