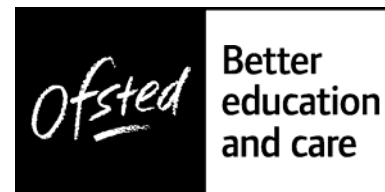


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5 July 2005

Mr D Williams  
Acting Headteacher  
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CV10 0NA

Dear Mr Williams

### **Implementation of Hartshill School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr K Gilbert and Mr P Davies, Additional Inspectors, Ms C Rodney HMI and Mr A Harrett HMI on 15 and 16 June 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: 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.

The school has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

The school is now permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the County Education Officer for Warwickshire. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF HARTSHILL SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit Year 11 pupils were taking examinations or were on examination leave. Across the rest of the school 48 lessons or parts of lessons, two registration sessions and two assemblies were inspected. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and the acting headteacher designate, the chair of the IEB and several senior managers who are leading work on the areas for improvement. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the acting headteacher, the acting headteacher designate, the chair of the IEB, and two representatives from the LEA.

The headteacher has resigned. The acting headteacher will return to his own school at the end of the term but will retain a mentoring role with the present acting deputy headteacher who has been asked to act as headteacher for the next academic year. A second acting deputy headteacher will remain at the school for a similar period.

The school has recruited several teachers for September, among them a deputy headteacher and subject leaders for English, mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages and religious education (RE). Two vacancies remain, one for physical education, the other for mathematics; the school is optimistic that appointments will be made. The three teachers who had been on maternity leave or sick leave have returned. The move away from temporary teachers and the appointment to the departments where there were no subject leader augers well for the future.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 39 of the 48 lessons; it was good in 22 lessons and very good in three. The short-term planning format is used consistently across the school and the quality of the plans is at least satisfactory and often good. Modifications have been made since the last visit and a series of prompts for the teachers have been added; in some cases these have been useful in assisting the teachers to improve the pupils' skills of speaking and listening, and to provide effective evaluations through concluding plenary sessions.

A number of common characteristics were observed in lessons where teaching was at its strongest. These included: good relationships between the teacher and the pupils; good planning that was well focused on what the pupils needed to learn; a well-managed learning environment with an effective classroom layout; clear routines and expectations; a well-structured approach to introducing language and concepts, including the anticipation of pupils' problems; and strategies for ensuring the pupils understood what they had to do, especially when being introduced to new resources or approaches to tested activities. Perhaps most significantly, teachers expected that the pupils presented work that was of a high standard.

A number of weaknesses were also apparent where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, but also on occasions where the teaching was otherwise satisfactory. The short-term plans took insufficient account of the range of ability within the class, and the organisation of the classroom failed to separate known pupils who found it difficult to concentrate on the allotted tasks. Some teachers persistently used 'sh' to no avail when attempting to quieten the pupils; others repeated 'ok' or 'right' inappropriately.

The behaviour of the pupils in classroom and around the school was at least satisfactory and often good. They greeted visitors courteously and held open doors for adults and pupils alike. Nevertheless, there have been 138 exclusions during the academic year to date, nine of which were permanent.

The pupils' attitudes to their learning were often related to the quality of teaching; however, in some lessons this was not the case. These lessons were well planned and resourced, relationships were good and teachers empathised with the group, yet there was reluctance among some pupils to remain on task, to contribute orally, or to show enthusiasm. The school has done too little so far to challenge these poor attitudes to learning. More generally, few pupils carry bags or have the equipment necessary for the lesson.

Attendance for the period from the start of the academic year until the time Year 11 went on examination leave was just over 90 per cent. Only Year 11 at 86 per cent had an average attendance less than 90 per cent. Although not as high as the school's target, this is an improvement over last year. At 82 per cent in Year 7 and 73 per cent in Year 10, the pupils' attendance in assemblies was, however, much lower than the school's overall figures. Punctuality to lessons is now generally good; the provision of movement time between lessons has proved a success. Punctuality at the start of the day has also improved. With the closure of the annexe at the end of the summer term, further improvements are predicted. Restrictions on pupils leaving the site at lunchtime, including the need for parental consent ensure that pupils do not roam the local area.

The acting headteacher returns to his own school at the end of term. He has done much during the two terms that he has been at Hartshill School. His firm but fair leadership has led to an improvement in morale with a belief among the teachers that they can succeed; this has been a major factor in the progress made. The members of the IEB and the LEA's advisers and consultants have also contributed to the recovery progress.

## **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

### **1: raise the pupils' achievement by improving the quality of teaching**

A further series of lesson observations have been undertaken; staff have been challenged appropriately and their successes recognised.

Reasonable progress has been made on this area for improvement.

## **2: ensure governors carry out roles in checking the work of the school**

The chair of the IEB has resigned since the last monitoring visit and has been replaced by the former vice chair, providing valuable continuity within this board. The wealth of expertise among its members allows for appropriate questions to be asked and the challenges made.

The minutes of the half and full-board meetings are detailed and clear, including the discussions that have taken place and the plans that are being made.

The school has moved forward on a broad front. The plans now include temporary accommodation on site to enable the annexe to be closed and the prospect that permanent accommodation and associated infrastructure will be in place by September 2006. Although there is a projected budget deficit by March 2006 of around £180k, an agreement has been made to eliminate the deficit by 2009. The higher than expected number of pupils hoping to join Year 7 in September, in an area where pupil numbers are declining, is a positive sign of support from the local community.

The chair of the IEB has already started to establish the mechanisms to form a shadow governing body during the spring term 2006. It is anticipated that this will be in place by the end of the summer term of that year.

Good progress has been made on this area for improvement.

## **3: ensure that policies are implemented consistently at all levels and that data is analysed fully to drive whole school improvement**

Since the last monitoring inspection, the behaviour policy has been redrafted to achieve a more consistent approach to behaviour management. The school has also redesigned the lesson-planning format and training and support with this have resulted in improvements across the school. Marking remains unsatisfactory, with inconsistencies evident within and between departments.

The school provides teachers and departments with a wealth of data on the pupils' prior attainment, including indicative targets. Some departments are beginning to use this data to set their own targets and to plan appropriate lessons for the pupils, but practice is inconsistent and some of the targets are no more than predictions.

Reasonable progress has been made on this area for improvement.

## **4: ensure managers apply monitoring systems more consistently and rigorously and tackle underperformance fearlessly**

Senior managers have raised awareness and expectations for heads of subjects, particularly in their role of improving teaching and learning within their departments. Local authority advisers have worked alongside heads of department

to improve the quality of their monitoring and evaluation. This has proved effective, but the school recognises that more training is needed if those middle managers who are joining the school in September are ready to fulfil the expectations of the recently introduced job descriptions. The school has not had a history or culture of monitoring and evaluating performance. Against this background the staff now recognise the need to, and the reason for, monitoring and evaluation to bring about improvements.

Reasonable progress has been made on this area for improvement.

**5: to meet statutory requirements: ensure all pupils have their full entitlement in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE), provide reports to parents on their child's progress in citizenship and provide a daily act of collective worship**

Suitable steps have been taken to increase the taught time for ICT in Year 9, which is now above that recommended. The school has identified key subjects providing a high proportion of ICT and plans are in place to develop it further with the provision of a computer suite in design and technology. An audit of staff skills has been completed and training has started to address the identified needs.

The school has successfully recruited a new head of RE, who will also lead the team involved with delivering the personal, social and health education programme. Sensibly, planning time has been allocated to ensure the programme is developed. Discrete citizenship lessons will be incorporated into the new course and school reports contain information on the pupils' progress in the subject.

Clear written guidance on the 'thought for the week', which forms the basis for the twice-weekly assembly for each year group, has been provided. However, the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not met because there are inconsistencies in the use of the form-tutor time.

Reasonable progress has been made on this area for improvement.