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Mr S Liddle  
Headteacher  
Winifred Holtby Technology College  
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Dear Mr Liddle,

## **SERIOUS WEAKNESSES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WINIFRED HOLTBY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Joe Clarke, Betty Colley, Jackie Sparkes and Mary Sewell Additional Inspectors to your school on 12 December 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was found to have serious weaknesses in April 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of receipt of this letter.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the work of the school, including 43 lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA)

### **Context**

Since the inspection in April 2005, one new deputy headteacher has been

appointed. Very shortly, there will be a consultation between the LA, parents and the school to prepare for the rebuilding of approximately 75% of the accommodation.

### **Achievement and standards**

Standards are improving. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2005 were better overall than in 2004. They rose substantially in English, improved slightly in science and were broadly the same in mathematics. The GCSE results in 2005 were also slightly better than in 2004. The school continued to do well with the number of pupils gaining five results in the range A\* to C. The proportion of pupils with five or more results in the range A\* to G improved slightly. GNVQ results in science were particularly strong. The best performing GCSE subjects were English, physical education studies, food technology and graphic products whilst the weakest were art, geography and history. Results in the national tests and GCSE show an improving picture overall but the school acknowledges that they still represent some underachievement, especially relating to lower attaining boys. However, the gap between the results and those that the pupils should be expected to achieve is closing, as the legacy of previous underachievement is successfully eliminated.

The school has a robust evidence base to show that national test and GCSE results will rise further in 2006, especially in relation to the proportion of its pupils on course to achieve five GCSE grades at A\* to G. Inspection evidence supports this. Standards in English and mathematics are rising because teaching is better. Lesson observations confirm that, whilst teachers have started to systematically tackle weakness in the pupils' literacy skills, weaknesses in presentation and writing still affect the quality of many pupils' work. There has been notable success with improving standards of GCSE work in some subjects, for example art, where results were far too low in 2005.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2005:

- raise standards of literacy because pupils should speak, write, spell and punctuate better - satisfactory progress

### **Personal development and well-being**

Attendance has improved from 86% to 88% since the April 2005 inspection, in response to more rigorous efforts by the school. However it is still unsatisfactory and affects learning. The punctuality of a minority of pupils to school and to lessons is still unsatisfactory. Behaviour and attitudes to learning have also improved as a result of a variety of initiatives. However some pupils, particularly boys in the lower ability groups, still cause disruption in lessons because they are

not interested in learning. Behaviour on corridors, stairways and around the buildings outside lessons is unsatisfactory because some pupils are far too boisterous. This is because teachers and other staff do not approach the management of behaviour in a consistent way. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social education and good use is made of external agencies. Citizenship lessons prepare pupils well for later life and a wide range of vocational courses is available. Careers education and work experience help pupils make informed decisions for the time when they leave school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they feel safe in school. Older pupils are given opportunities to take on responsibility, for example, by acting as prefects and mentoring younger pupils. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged through the dining room, food technology and science lessons and encouragement in sports activities. The school has received the Healthy Schools' Award.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2005:

- improve the unsatisfactory classroom attitudes and behaviour of a substantial minority of pupils, because they are holding back academic standards and achievement – inadequate progress
- continue to strive to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality – satisfactory progress with attendance, unsatisfactory progress with punctuality.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 38 of the 43 lessons. Teaching and learning are improving. Most lessons are characterised by good planning and structure. Senior teachers have monitored lessons regularly and have correctly identified areas for development. Teachers have been well supported and have improved their practices. The huge focus the school has placed on teachers' professional development is apparent in the classroom. Teachers set clear objectives for learning at the outset and check how far they have been achieved at the end of the lesson; this is working well in a range of subject areas.

The school has had considerable success with eliminating the unsatisfactory teaching in English, mathematics and religious education. Many lessons in these areas are characterised by a good learning atmosphere, plenty of pace, challenge and often enjoyment. The focus on developing literacy is evident in teaching but has not yet had time to have a real impact on standards. The use of information technology in lessons has improved but there is still scope for further development.

The marking of pupils' work is now more closely linked to National Curriculum criteria for improvement. However, the use of assessment information to plan lessons, although improved, is inconsistent. Not all teachers have followed the school's approach to linking assessment with learning. There is little evidence of pupils working independently or evaluating their own work. The school has a very effective system for tracking pupils' progress over the course of their school career. Those pupils who are making slower progress are identified for additional support via a range of strategies.

The most significant weakness in a minority of lessons relates to behaviour management. In the lessons where teaching is good, pupils' conduct is good. However, the management of immature behaviour is still inconsistent across teaching groups with the result that small numbers of pupils slow the pace of learning for all.

## **Curriculum**

Provision in English, mathematics and religious education, heavily criticised at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Suitably qualified teachers provide adequate courses in these subjects and the school now meets statutory requirements in religious education. Numbers of computers available to pupils have increased but are still too low so access to information technology remains inadequate. However, the school has earmarked future finance to resolve this deficiency.

There has been good use of technology college status funding to improve computer access, and to provide extra courses and enrichment opportunities for pupils. The aims of the college bid are monitored and evaluated well, and good progress is being made towards its targets.

A good number of courses both academic and vocational are provided in Years 10 and 11. These cater well for the needs of all pupils. Courses with a strong vocational element have helped to improve the attendance of several pupils in danger of complete disaffection with their schooling. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been re-organised successfully but there are not yet enough classroom assistants to cater for all of the pupils who need extra help.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The good aspects of provision in this area, identified at the previous inspection, are still in place. These are especially evident in relation to individual pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities in particular. Pupils know

that there are many members of staff who will go the extra mile to help them when they require assistance, especially when their needs are urgent. Particularly good assistance for pupils with physical difficulties enables them to access as much of the curriculum as possible. Older pupils especially are well informed about their future options and know how they are getting on in terms of their targets for GCSE.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2005:

- remove the weaknesses in teaching identified in the main body of the report.  
– satisfactory progress
- bring provision in English, mathematics and RE up to a good standard – good progress
- provide more computers and more help for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. – satisfactory progress.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The improvement plan is strongly and realistically focused on eight key areas, through which the school aims to improve the education offered to its pupils. Priorities are clear, actions to be taken are identified, and evaluation methodology is strong. Whilst there is still a long way to go, particularly in improving attitudes, behaviour and attendance, the improvement plan has had a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work, particularly on teaching and standards. Capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

The school has suffered from considerable staffing turbulence and a legacy of long and short-term absence. Stability is now improving as staff morale improves and good systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided. Teachers are regularly observed in their work and benefit from continuing professional development. The quality of lessons is improving and pupils are making better progress. The role of middle managers is being developed through relevant training and sharing of good practice.

Governance, judged inadequate at the time of the previous inspection, is now good. The governing body has been strengthened through new appointments, bringing a greater breadth of expertise to its various working groups. Vacancies have been filled and governors are now much more involved in the day to day work of the school. The school now meets all statutory requirements for religious education, and collective worship is partly in place and improved. Robust

systems and procedures are now firmly in place for holding the school to account for the quality of education that it provides.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2005:

- evaluate all aspects of the school's performance accurately and continually – good progress
- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and RE for pupils in Year 11 – satisfactory progress.

### **External support**

The LEA's support for the school is satisfactory. It has made realistic judgements on the school's strengths and weaknesses within its statement of action and commentary. The help provided has assisted the school in making improvement at an adequate rate since serious weaknesses were identified in April 2005. For example, there has been considerable benefit from the visits from the link advisor and effective support for key subjects, especially English and mathematics.

### **Main Judgements**

The school has made satisfactory progress in removing the causes of its serious weaknesses. This visit has raised some concerns about the standard of education provided and the school's performance will be monitored.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve standards further by strengthening teaching so that it fully engages lower attaining pupils and eliminates unsatisfactory attitudes.
- Provide more consistency in the supervision of pupils outside classrooms so that unsatisfactory behaviour is routinely and effectively challenged.
- Implement more robust procedures for effectively challenging pupils who are late to school and to lessons.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Corporate Director of Kingston-upon-Hull LA.

Yours sincerely

John Paddick  
**Additional Inspector**