



Mr C Mills
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Dear Mr Mills

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Mr J Lovgreen, Mr J Ashton and Mrs J Tolley, additional inspectors to your school on 28 February and 1 March, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2004.

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

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other key managers, a group of teachers, groups of pupils, the chair and vice-chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in the 2005 National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations were inadequate. At Key Stage 3 standards were slightly below average and although some pupils made adequate progress many did not. At Key

Stage 4 standards were below average although the proportion of pupils gaining five A* to C grades rose from 37% to 47%. However, the proportion gaining five A* to G grades fell and the number of pupils achieving no GCSE passes increased significantly. Between the ages of 11 and 16 pupils did not make the progress they should.

The school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress against targets suggest some improvement in overall attainment although evidence from this visit indicates that progress and standards in lessons are not good enough to ensure that all pupils are able to reach their potential.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2004:

- Develop effective strategies to address underachievement – inadequate progress

Personal development and well-being

Although attendance since September has improved by three percentage points compared to the same period last year, at 90.6% it remains stubbornly below average. The improvement is due to a better co-ordinated and rigorous team approach to monitoring and following up of non-attendance and to more proactive work with pupils and parents. Attendance remains higher overall with the younger year groups and is weakest in Years 10 and 11. Punctuality has improved as the school has tightened up further on its definition of what counts as being late to school.

Behaviour is satisfactory overall; it is good in most lessons and in the playground. The problem of inconsiderate jostling in the corridors remains, particularly from older boys. The school's policy of everyone walking to the left is not being enforced. Pupils support the firm line taken by senior staff in setting and maintaining higher standards of behaviour. 'Things are better than they used to be' said pupils in Years 10 and 11. Exclusion rates are lower than in previous years but are still too high. The use of seclusion and quiet rooms together with the negotiated system of mediation and re-entry to class, is beginning to have a positive effect.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has not improved since the previous monitoring visit. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 32 of the 40 lessons observed; it was good in 12 lessons and outstanding in one. The proportion of

lessons in which pupils made satisfactory or good progress closely mirrors that of the teaching. However, the proportion of teaching which is good or better is too low; this is the key factor which is preventing standards and achievement from rising with the necessary speed.

In the best lessons teachers quickly explain what and how pupils will learn, setting timed tasks which allow pupils to understand and link ideas. Pace is brisk and questioning is used to develop ideas and to check what still needs to be learnt. A good range of methods is used well, such as class and paired discussion, and asking pupils to assess and comment on each other's work are used well. As a result pupils make good progress.

Mutual respect and cooperation between teachers and pupils are evident in most lessons. Too often, however, teachers do not capitalise on the positive atmosphere and good relationships they have created. They mistake passivity for attention and pupils doing a task for purposeful learning. The major weakness in teaching is its lack of ambition and aspiration. Pupils rarely experience real enjoyment and curiosity, or show keenness and creativity. Both teachers and pupils have too low an expectation of what can and should be achieved. This is not helped when lesson planning is not sufficiently geared to pupils' needs. In less successful lessons there is too much reliance on whole-class teaching. Examples were seen of pupils who had finished work being left with nothing specific to do, whilst others in the same room floundered at the same task, which was beyond them. In too many lessons pupils do not learn skills such as how to take helpful notes, or the value of thinking about each other's ideas; opportunities for collaborative working are limited. Not all teachers use assessment information well enough to plan lessons or track the progress of pupils against national standards. Too many teachers fail to set homework regularly, to the disadvantage of pupils. Checks to see that homework is being set, marked and recorded are not picking up the extent of the problem. Insufficient attention is given to the progress pupils make in lessons. What makes an effective lesson is still not clearly enough understood and some advice noted on observation forms is too vague to be helpful. Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to add value to the pupils' learning.

Work-related courses delivered in partnership with neighbouring colleges better meet the needs of some Year 10 and 11 pupils and have improved their attitudes to learning. Truancy amongst this group has decreased and attendance has risen. Systems to check on the attendance and progress of pupils taught off-site have improved since the last monitoring visit and are now effective. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide teachers with a

thorough analysis of pupils' needs and clear guidance about how these needs are to be addressed in lessons. However, the use of this information in planning lessons is inconsistent.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2004:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning – inadequate progress

Leadership and management

The work of the senior leadership team has not secured further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last visit. The team has not ensured that agreed strategies are consistently implemented by all teachers. Despite considerable monitoring of lessons and the introduction of a range of other strategies, the proportion of lessons in which pupils make good or better progress is not high enough to ensure a rise in standards of the magnitude necessary to counter past underachievement. Evaluation of the impact of the school's work to improve the quality of teaching and learning and address underachievement lacks rigour.

The newly qualified teachers appointed from the start of the school year are well supported through a carefully planned induction programme; they are settling well and their presence contributes to the greater stability permanent staffing has brought to the school. The eight middle managers new to post demonstrate the potential to become effective in their role and are part way through a course of management training. More responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for leading improvement initiatives has been devolved to middle managers; a number of them are rising well to this challenge. The impact of their monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of staff records is not apparent in some departments.

The refurbishment programme continues to create a more pleasant environment for pupils and staff. The recent introduction of interactive whiteboard technology and upgrading of computer suites is an improvement.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in March 2004:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels – satisfactory progress
- Improve the accommodation and resources – satisfactory progress

External support

The LA continues to provide an appropriate range of support in consultation with the school. Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) funding has enabled the school to organise professional development for middle and senior managers. The school's links with external providers have had a positive impact on developing the curriculum to better meet the needs of Key Stage 4 pupils.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures– satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

Senior leaders need to ensure that:

- the proportion of lessons in which pupils make good or better progress is increased;
- agreed teaching and learning strategies are implemented consistently and rigorously in lessons;
- teachers make better use of assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of all the pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Leisure for Salford.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Kirby
H M Inspector