

Tribal Group  
1-4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR  
T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



6 July 2007

Mr K Hollins  
The Acting Headteacher  
Cheadle High School  
Station Road  
Cheadle  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST10 1LH

Dear Mr Hollins

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Cheadle High School

### Introduction

Following my visit with Sean Harford HMI and Mary Davis, Charlotte Evers and Peter Lawley, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 27 June 2007, 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 became subject to special measures in January 2007.

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, a group of students, the chair and vice chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

The headteacher has been absent due to illness since 18 April. For a short period of time there was an acting headteacher supported by a consultant ex-headteacher and the LA. A headteacher from a local secondary school became acting headteacher on 11 June. There were no Year 11 students at school during the visit. This visit focused on provision in Key Stage 3 and 4 only.

## Achievement and standards

At the time of the last inspection, students were judged to make good progress in Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics. Predicted 2007 test scores for the current Year 9 students suggest progress will have been similar.

To improve the achievement of Year 11 students a range of intervention strategies were implemented rigorously. This improved academic guidance included extra revision classes and mentoring for those students identified as underperforming by a member of the senior leadership team (SLT). As a direct result of this work standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are predicted to rise, including in some subjects where they were well below average in 2006. However, taking into account the students' attainment on entry, the predicted GCSE results, if met, will not equate to significant improvements in overall achievement.

Students' progress was at least satisfactory in many of the lessons observed. However, there still remains some underachievement over a longer period of time. For example, in the Year 11 mock exams it was clear that the middle and lower ability students had not achieved well. Assessment data from other year groups also reveals little or no progress made by groups of students. In subjects where there is underachievement, there are weaknesses in the quality of academic guidance given in lessons and in teachers' marking.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- raise standards by providing all students with clear guidance on how to improve in all subjects – satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. Students say that standards of behaviour are good in class and that their learning is rarely disrupted by students who behave badly. During the monitoring inspection visit there was a high level of supervision in the corridors and outside at break and lunchtime, ensuring a calm atmosphere as students moved around the school.

As a result of a consistent approach to behaviour management, including the policy of greeting students when they arrive at each lesson, reported incidents of poor behaviour are few and none were seen by the inspection team. Students were well mannered, friendly and confident in their relationships with adults. They listened attentively in lessons and, on most occasions, their behaviour was good.

Teachers know their students well and, through early intervention, have been able to put robust strategies in place to support those with social problems. For example, the 'Progress to Success' programme for identified students includes team building exercises, work experience and careers guidance, providing a full time nurse and school based social worker to focus on anti-social behaviour and raise self-esteem. Parents have been involved in this process and have valued the support that the

school offers. As a result, exclusions have reduced considerably in the last term, although students are still being excluded for relatively minor incidents.

### Quality of provision

Teaching has improved and in the majority of lessons seen teaching was at least satisfactory. In a large proportion of these lessons teaching was good. There was also a small number of lessons where outstanding teaching was observed. In contrast there was also a similar number of lessons where teaching was inadequate. A common feature of teaching was a focus on what was taught, rather than how well students were learning. The school is beginning to put appropriate emphasis on improving students' learning, including making this a key focus of lesson planning, but the impact is yet to be fully seen.

In most lessons, students were clear about the purpose of the work. Teachers' effective organisation and management, coupled with students' good behaviour and positive attitudes, led to satisfactory progress. Most students were willing and capable learners, who showed interest in their work. However, in many of the lessons seen, students were not given sufficient opportunities to be independent learners, and some teaching over dominated the lesson and slowed down students' learning. The most effective teaching seen ensured students of different abilities were all given appropriately challenging work. However, too many teachers set the same task to all students where there was a range of abilities and did not, for example, provide extension work or resources for the most able. In the best lessons, teaching motivated students with lively and stimulating activities, brisk pace and appropriately demanding work. Where the pace of work was slow, students lacked enthusiasm and made little progress.

Although there have been improvements, there is still inconsistency in the use of assessment. Regular assessments of students' progress have taken place, but senior staff are aware that this information varies in accuracy. The information has also not always been analysed effectively enough to detect and correct weaknesses in teaching of particular skills and knowledge. Not all teachers took full advantage of the range of opportunities to check students' progress in lessons. In most subjects, students knew their targets and whether they were on course to reach them. In some subjects, good marking has given students clear subject specific targets to help them to improve their work. However, some marking refers simply to work done well, or badly, and there has been no clear guidance as to how it might be improved in future. Some work has not been marked at all.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- improve teaching and learning by using the outcomes of assessment to plan work of appropriate difficulty for all students – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

Early on after the last inspection, those responsible for leadership and management began to receive support from a consultant ex-headteacher and various other LA consultants and advisors. This support resulted in a huge range of suggested actions

which put significant demands on the school to change. The senior leadership team (SLT) began to take on board advice and raised expectations and focused on improving standards, especially in Year 11. However, because the varying advice they received lacked cohesion the SLT struggled to manage the improvements needed.

More recent evidence indicates a growing confidence of the SLT to direct the course of action. For example, they have become increasingly aware and more effective in dealing with specific areas where underperformance remains. The very recent input you have had as acting headteacher has supported this development. You have clear plans to address the weaknesses in the school and have quickly begun to stamp your mark on the way the school works.

In general, the school has made a satisfactory start in dealing with the inconsistencies in the work of staff, which is a significant factor in delaying improvements. Behaviour, as already mentioned, has improved and is now good. However, some inconsistencies still remain and the quality of teaching and learning is still not secure. For example, the staff's understanding of data and its use in planning lessons and setting targets continues to be extremely varied in quality, both between different departments and within single departments. Furthermore, schemes of work and lesson plan formats are still not consistent and therefore result in different ways of working. The SLT know all of this and have plans to make greater use of assessment data to inform a new cycle of regular internal SLT monitoring visits to each department.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2007:

- reduce inconsistencies in the work of staff by setting clear expectations for the management of behaviour and the quality of teaching – satisfactory.

### External support

The support from the local authority has been satisfactory in that the school now has an acting headteacher and SLT who are more focused on what they need to do. The initial support given to the school came through a wide range of consultancy activity. This generated a considerable amount of advice, some of which has been contradictory. The LA are now confident that the school can take more control of improvement work whilst continuing to draw on support when appropriate. The LA has effectively evaluated in some detail its own work and the work of the school. It has had to readjust its support for the school in the light of changes in leadership and management and is realistic in considering that the school could be removed from special measures by Easter 2008.

### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all senior staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure all staff use effective assessment strategies during lessons so that they are aware of how to identify good learning.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children and Lifelong Learning for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Andrew Cook  
H M Inspector