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Ms Gill Broom  
Headteacher  
Hameldon Community College  
Byron Street  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB12 6NU

Dear Ms Broom

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HAMELDON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Following my visit with Gill Jones HMI, Peter McKay AI and Judith Straw AI, to your college on 20 May 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures in February 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Standards at Lancashire LA.

Yours sincerely

Marguerite McCloy HMI  
H M I n s p e c t o r

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF HAMELDON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 May 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the college's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and associate headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff, groups of students, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority (LA).

### Context

The college continues to experience difficulties due to a relatively high proportion of staff absences. Some departments have been particularly affected by this, for example mathematics and science. One of the two deputy headteachers is currently absent and the LA has appointed an experienced associate headteacher for two terms to support and strengthen leadership at all levels across the college.

### Achievement and standards

The new system for tracking and monitoring students' progress through half-termly assessments is now firmly embedded. It is beginning to provide a clear picture about the standards students are achieving and the rate at which they are making progress towards their targets. The results of the most recent assessments indicate that if students perform as expected, challenging targets are in reach and standards are likely to be higher than those reported in 2007. The proportion of students in Year 9 on course to reach both the expected and higher levels in English, mathematics and science is close to that found nationally, except for the higher levels in science. These predicted results would represent satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points on entry to the college. Similarly, students in Year 11 are on track to achieve standards which by all measures would be close to average. In particular, the college expects the percentage of students who achieve 5 A\* to C grades in GCSE examinations to rise significantly, particularly so for students achieving this with English and mathematics included. Again, this would represent satisfactory progress for a cohort who entered the predecessor schools with broadly average standards but slipped significantly in Key Stage 3.

The college acknowledges that if students are to achieve the expected results they will need to maintain their current standards of work. In this respect, systems for identifying those who are at risk of underachieving are proving to be effective. Groups of Year 11 students in particular have benefited from well targeted support, aimed specifically at improving attendance, behaviour and motivation. In other years, small groups are mentored by progress and development managers and some subject departments are providing additional support and guidance. Nevertheless, there remains a core of students who underachieve persistently, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The college acknowledges that this can be tackled only by increasing the proportion of teaching which is good or better. However, underperformance is much

less prevalent for those younger students whose entire secondary education has been in the college.

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

- Raise levels of achievement – satisfactory

#### Personal development and well-being

Behaviour is satisfactory and attitudes are continuing to improve. Where teaching and learning are good, students respond well and show enthusiasm for their work. Students report that behaviour and attitudes have improved but remain variable and dependent on the teacher's capacity to manage lessons effectively. It remains the case that although most students are willing to learn, a minority show little enthusiasm for doing so. Attitudes to learning are best when teachers make lessons interesting and enable students to be active learners. In lessons taught by temporary or supply teachers behaviour is usually satisfactory but students can be passive and their progress limited by a lack of continuity. However, most students respond more positively when lessons are taught by supply staff who are known to them because they teach in the college regularly.

There have been a number of positive developments in recent weeks. The college rigorously analyses the information gained on the behaviour of students both in lessons and at break and lunchtime and can show that incidents of poor behaviour continue to decline. The 'learning behaviour policy' has recently been refined and clarified so that students and staff have a clearer idea of what is expected of them. Students report that some, but not all, teachers are becoming stricter. They want better discipline because then everyone can learn and make progress. The number of fixed-term exclusions continues to fall steadily, as does the number of students sent to work in the internal exclusion room.

The college continues to strive to improve attendance and punctuality with some success. A new full-time senior attendance officer appointed in April has already had an impact: for example, attendance by Year 9 students in the recent Key Stage 3 SATs assessment week was a record 96.7%. The college identifies students with a poor record of attendance and closely monitors these, offering support and encouragement to them and their families. A good system is in place to reward and commend attendance and weekly attendance figures are published and celebrated where appropriate. Arrangements for recording students' attendance should be secure because electronic registers are taken in every lesson. Nevertheless, temporary or visiting teachers are not always able to access the system and are sometimes unaware of how many students should be present in each session.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been adapted to offer a wider range of courses appropriate for lower attaining students and those disaffected with academic learning. These include construction, applied art, health and social care, a BTEC in physical education and radio technology. These courses are already proving to be effective in maintaining the interest and enjoyment of students and raising achievement.

There is very good support for vulnerable students in the Learning Support Centre. There are plans to relocate this in the Eaves Building next term with enlarged and enhanced accommodation to include a nurture room, inclusion room and office space. Good liaison with outside agencies aims to offer a holistic approach to supporting vulnerable students. The staff who manage the centre are enthusiastic and committed. The centre offers full-time, part-time or very temporary respite for students who need a little time away from mainstream lessons. There continues to be good co-ordination between the Learning Centre, student well-being co-ordinators and personal development managers.

A new college magazine is building a greater sense of community through shared celebration of success. There are more frequent school council meetings so that students feel their voice is heard. They generally feel safe and appreciate the efforts made to help them to eat healthily and keep fit. The college recently achieved national Healthy School status. Students are proud of the fund-raising they do and their efforts to support Fair Trade. Students are beginning to say that they enjoy college more, and many are becoming increasingly self-motivated and ambitious. The majority of Year 11 students attended the 'College Prom' at a local hotel and were praised for their exemplary behaviour.

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

- Improve students' behaviour and attitudes to learning – satisfactory

#### Quality of provision

The proportion of good or better teaching, at just over two-fifths, has remained consistent since the last inspection visit. This is a positive picture, as the improvements have been sustained during a period of significant staff absence. Teachers continue to be provided with a variety of well focused bespoke training to enable them to improve the quality of their lessons; this links well to the new policies for behaviour management and teaching and learning. The training programme for identified members of staff, together with the voluntary support groups enables good practice to be shared and is continuing to contribute strongly to securing improvements in teaching and learning. Observations of teaching by senior and middle leaders, supported by LA advisers, continue to provide an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in lessons. This knowledge is used effectively in directing the work of the teaching and learning coach. Good quality plans to enhance this further by appointing a 'coaching team' of nine teachers across all faculties are now in place.

Strategies introduced earlier in the year are now well embedded and evident throughout the college; this includes a consistent format for lesson plans and the sharing of learning objectives and intended outcomes at the start of each lesson. This ensures that most students know exactly what they are expected to achieve. However, these learning targets are not yet used effectively by all teachers to measure the progress students make during the lesson or to determine the next steps in their learning. This means that underachievement is not identified as early

as it could be. Where teaching is most effective, students know their individual learning target levels and use the teacher's 'What I am Looking For' statements in each lesson to enable them to make progress. Inspectors observed pockets of effective practice where targets are used well and are clearly linked to the levels students are predicted to achieve at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.

Teachers are including a wider variety of methods within lessons to motivate students and improve the quality of their learning. Group work and shared discussion is used effectively by some teachers. For example, in a religious education lesson on the theme of the sanctity of life, a discussion between students was effectively facilitated by the teacher to develop their understanding. In this lesson students appreciated the opportunity to share their views and were respectful of each other's point of view, showing maturity, tolerance and understanding.

Where teaching is good or better, the rapport between the students and the teachers is a consistently strong feature. Teachers explain activities clearly, check the students' understanding of the task and praise is well judged. They manage the time effectively and provide a good balance between challenge and support. In these lessons students are well motivated, they work independently and make good progress. Homework is used well to link class activities clearly to students' course work and teachers engender in students a sense of pride in their work.

Where teaching is less than good, students become restless and low level disruption is a common feature in those lessons. Progress is slowed because there are constant interruptions and teachers do not explain what students are expected to do with enough clarity. In some lessons, poor behaviour is tolerated by the teacher resulting in overall low expectations and a lack of progress. There is a lack of consistency in the implementation of the college's behaviour policy. Students themselves recognise this and are aware that some staff apply systems more fairly and firmly than others.

The college's revised marking policy has been introduced but has yet to impact on the consistency of teachers' marking. There are examples of effective practice which can be shared, most notably in Art and English.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so more of it is good or better – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have an honest and accurate view of the college's strengths and weaknesses and a clear determination to improve the quality of education for all students. They recognise where inconsistencies remain in some areas of the college's work and are making every effort to remedy these. Progress in achieving consistency has been frustratingly slow as a minority of staff are not fully committed to the shared vision for the development of the college, and therefore do not always adhere to agreed policies and deadlines. In addition, coping with high levels of staff absence has put a strain on available energy and resources.

It is to the credit of the leadership team and all staff that the slow but steady improvements in teaching and learning have continued during this difficult period when staff morale is affected by uncertainty about teacher deployment in the autumn term.

There are examples of good practice in some departments where middle leadership is improving as a result of training and development programmes. Where this is working well, middle leaders have an accurate view of the performance of their department, through effective monitoring and evaluation strategies. They hold staff to account for their contribution to raising standards, and ensure that agreed action plans are implemented. Examples of this can be seen in Modern Foreign Languages and Physical Education. However, this is not the case in all departments because professional skills, understanding and attitudes are more variable.

In preparation for the future move in 2010 to a new building with a reduced number of students on roll, the college's standard admission number into Year 7 is now set at 150, significantly less than in the past. This has necessitated a challenging task for leaders and governors of the college to review staffing levels and plan for the organisation of the college next term. The college is appropriately supported and challenged by the governing body which continues to grow in strength and benefits from governors' good range of skills and experience. Financial management systems are strong and the college has recently managed to set a balanced budget despite considerable challenges and limitations. Whilst governors are looking to the future in consultations regarding the new building and its role in the community, they are fully committed to working to improve the education offered to all students presently in the college.

Although recent changes in senior leadership are in the early stages, the headteacher, associate headteacher and deputy headteacher are already working well together on key issues for improvement. They acknowledge that the split-site nature of the college buildings makes some aspects of whole-staff communication difficult, hence the introduction of the daily bulletins which staff appreciate. There is a clear commitment to tackling underperformance across a number of departments when all other support systems have failed to bring about necessary improvements.

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

- Improve the consistency of leadership and management – satisfactory

#### External support

The LA appointed an Associate Headteacher to work full time in the college for two terms from Easter 2008 to support leadership at all levels in speeding up progress on key aspects of the action plan. Further development work has been undertaken with curriculum and pastoral middle-leaders. They continue to receive support internally and from consultants, including two INSET training sessions led by advisers with more planned in the near future. The LA's personnel and Human Resources departments are providing valuable support and advice to the leadership team, governors and staff in preparation for next term's re-organisation of staffing levels.

## Priorities for further improvement

The college should continue its work on the four priorities identified in the February 2007 inspection. In addition, the next monitoring inspection will provide an appropriate opportunity to focus on the contribution made by the college's specialism in Business, Enterprise and Science to raising achievement across both key stages.