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Mr Martin Burgess  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Burgess

### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SHUTTLEWORTH COLLEGE

Following my visit with Jim Bennetts and Peter McKay, Additional Inspectors to your college on 9 and 10 July 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures in February 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures is inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 for Standards and Inclusion for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith  
Additional Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF SHUTTLEWORTH COLLEGE

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 July 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the college's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and two governors, students and representatives of the local authority (LA).

### Context

The previous headteacher resigned and left the college at the end of the spring term 2008. An experienced headteacher was appointed from 21 April 2008. Many new teaching staff, including an assistant headteacher for inclusion, have been appointed this term. All middle leader posts have been filled for the first time since the college opened in September 2006 and, apart from one, are operational in the college. The college expects to have a full staff at the start of the autumn term 2008. In addition to teaching staff, two learning support workers and an attendance strategy manager have been appointed. Two additional experienced governors have been appointed by the LA but have not yet attended a meeting of the governing body. Since September 2006, the college has been housed temporarily in a building used previously as a sixth form college. The college will move out of this building and into a nearby, new purpose-built building at the start of the autumn term. Only Years 7, 8 and 9 students were in college at the time of the monitoring inspection because Year 11 students have left and most of the Year 10 students were out of college on work experience.

### Achievement and standards

The college forecasts that a slightly higher proportion of Year 11 students will achieve at least five GCSE results at grade C or above than in 2007 and that the figure inclusive of English and mathematics will be slightly lower than in 2007. However, the reliability of these forecasts is uncertain because the assessments on which they are based are not totally secure. To achieve these outcomes would require a substantial improvement on the mock GCSE results. The forecast results would be well below the targets set on the basis of students' results in Key Stage 2 national tests and other nationally recognised tests of cognitive ability.

The forecasts for Year 9 results are well short of targets overall. The college has secure data to suggest that there may be a modest improvement in the proportion of students reaching Level 5 in mathematics. For English and science a greater improvement is forecast but assessment information is less secure. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stage 3 are low. Headway in some ICT lessons is handicapped at present by lack of facilities to project, for instance, samples of students' work onto a whiteboard to illustrate what is going well and what could be improved. However, progress in ICT is improving with newly achieved stability in the staffing.

In Years 8 and 10, data from tracking students' progress show that a great deal of headway must be made over the next year for outcomes to be near the targets set. The college is aware of the need to set ever more challenging targets for individual students so that they catch up on previous underachievement. In the future, the college plans to revise individual students' targets upwards whenever there is evidence to justify that.

In the majority of lessons seen progress was modest rather than good and in some lessons it was weak. Students' work in books shows patchy progress. Some tasks capture students' interest and they take pride in giving the work their best efforts. Some work is unchallenging, repetitive and dull; sloppy presentation indicates that limited effort is made with it.

At the time of this visit, Years 10 and 11 were not in college so there was ample support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their progress is similar to that of others. Data for 2007 showed that girls' progress at age 14 and age 16 is less than that of boys. In one lesson it was apparent that most girls had disengaged from learning although most boys maintained attention. In some subjects, girls' commitment to GCSE coursework is weaker than that of boys and the standard of some coursework compares unfavourably with work in examination conditions.

Students' literacy skills remain weak. In some lessons students were slow to recognise and sort different features of writing in the diverse material they were expected to read; they also had difficulty summarising key points on paper. In lessons that were generally good, more could have been done to refine and build confidence in the students' literacy skills.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Increase significantly the rate of students' progress to raise standards – inadequate

#### Personal development and well-being

There are indications that behaviour is improving. The college has exceeded its target for reducing exclusions although the number is still too high. The number of fixed-term exclusions has been reduced by about two thirds and there have been no permanent exclusions this year. The number of occasions on which senior leaders have been called out to deal with misbehaviour in lessons has been reduced by about a half as teachers have begun to use the revised behaviour management policy more effectively. However, poor behaviour and attitudes remain as a significant barrier to progress because the college has not yet developed a learning culture to embrace all students. Too many students become easily distracted and disengaged, resorting to low-level but nevertheless disruptive behaviour particularly when teaching is not stimulating. Such disruption is exacerbated by the need for teachers to deal with frequent latecomers to lessons. Behaviour around the college observed during this visit was mainly satisfactory with some that was rather loud and boisterous. However, the younger students report that when Years 10 and 11 are present they can feel verbally and physically threatened, particularly as they are

required to be outside at break and lunchtimes where they feel there is not enough supervision.

Attendance has improved since last year although it remains well below average and the attendance target has not been met. There has been little impact on securing any sustained improvement since the February inspection, largely because the newly appointed attendance strategy manager has had insufficient time in post.

Nevertheless, the college's efforts to raise attendance at Year 9 national tests and Year 11 GCSE examinations, based on the judicious use of rewards and incentives, were successful. Poor punctuality, both at the start of the day and to lessons, remains a persistent problem for which the college has yet to find a successful remedy.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Continue to improve students' attendance and behaviour – inadequate

### Quality of provision

Of the 26 lessons seen a few were inadequate and only a minority were good; no outstanding teaching was seen. This confirms the evaluation established by the college and the LA through extensive lesson observations since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching has not improved greatly.

There were few instances of behaviour problems in lessons and classroom relationships are generally good. In most lessons, teachers are very adroit at curtailing potentially disruptive behaviour and support staff are effective in keeping potentially disaffected students engaged on the work in hand. In a few lessons, staff are less effective in nipping degenerating behaviour in the bud and learning is disrupted.

Teachers generally structure their lessons appropriately following college guidance. Lessons indicate what students are to learn and main points are re-capped towards the end. Efforts are often made to explain to students how they can improve. Work is suitably pitched in most classes that are set by ability, though there is little evidence of work that is specifically tailored for different ability groups within a class. In the more successful lessons teachers make the work interesting, bring enthusiasm to the classroom and set a lively pace. However, this is by no means always the case. Teachers' explanations are usually clear although there is a tendency to talk too much with insufficient chance for students to participate actively and so the pace of learning slows. In too many lessons the focus on assessment leads unhelpfully to tedious over-emphasis on the level statements in the National Curriculum rather than, for instance, showing examples of what the criteria actually mean so that students can relate to them more readily. However, a good example of GCSE criteria being shared with able students in Year 9 was observed; students were able to use the criteria competently to grade samples of work, thus consolidating their understanding of what is needed in order to score highly. Opportunities for cultivating speaking and listening skills, reading for comprehension and writing summaries are often missed or under-emphasised. Occasionally, reading material is

too complex and expectations of writing are not well matched to students' capabilities being sometimes too high, sometimes too low.

For too many students, an over-use of work sheets means that their recorded work is jumbled and not a useful resource from which to learn and revise. Teachers' marking is variable in quality; there are examples of encouraging comments, occasional pointers for specific ways in which students can improve but often it is perfunctory. Science has insufficient funding to provide appropriate text books adequately for all year groups. Students in Year 8 showed a lack of knowledge of earlier work in science due to lack of systematic consolidation. Schemes of work in science do not re-visit previously covered topics often enough so that progress remains 'two steps forward, one step back'. The match of teachers' specialisms to the subjects they teach is not always ideal and can result in slow progress; most make valiant efforts, sometimes with much success. Teaching assistants are usually effective in supporting individual pupils with additional needs.

A few teachers are receiving coaching in additional classroom skills and alternative approaches. This has promise but has not yet eliminated unsatisfactory lessons. The dissemination of good practice by peer observation is not yet an established custom.

The whole-college system for tracking students' progress is informed by a wealth of data derived from departmental assessments. The security of these assessments is variable but is increasing as more moderation is carried out internally by subject leaders and externally by the LA. This assessment information is used to provide students and parents with regular reports on progress towards targets based on prior attainment. The system is effective in providing progress managers with a clear overview of performance and in enabling them to identify those students who are, or who are at risk of, underachieving across a range of subjects. Senior leaders acknowledge that a staffing structure is not in place to bridge the gap between pastoral and subject-based support to assure the necessary intervention and support. Plans to do so from the start of next term are in place. Departmental tracking systems are at various stages of development but in the core subjects are increasingly leading to carefully targeted specialist support for students who are at risk of or who are falling behind. However, the impact of these systems on raising standards is not yet evident.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Eliminate unsatisfactory teaching and increase the proportion that is good – inadequate
- Use assessment data consistently across the college to identify and tackle underachievement – inadequate

### Leadership and management

The arrival of an experienced headteacher, new to the college, has brought a clear focus and direction to its work firmly based on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement. Senior leaders have clarified their roles although these have yet to be set out in job descriptions. The morale of staff, leaders and students is rising

as they begin to understand what is required of them to ensure that the college moves forward.

The headteacher has rightly focused on the recruitment of staff and has succeeded in achieving a full complement of middle leaders, bar one who is absent, and a full staff ready for the start of next term. A further priority has been to prepare students and staff for the move to the new building. This is being seen as a fresh start and has involved much time and energy of all staff. Students are being well prepared for the clear and high standards of learning and conduct the college expects in the new buildings and many students are excited about the move.

A start has been made to simplify and strengthen the college's systems of monitoring and evaluation. New job descriptions have been developed for both curriculum and pastoral middle leaders with a clear emphasis on their accountability for students' achievement and provision. Previous systems of monitoring and evaluation at middle and senior level have not been effective enough in raising standards. Systems were over-complex and resulted in a lack of rigour in their implementation and follow-up. In some cases the lack of subject leadership hampered meaningful evaluation. With an almost full complement of middle leaders and plans in place to provide training and develop the monitoring and evaluating skills of middle leaders next term, the college is poised to develop more rigorous self-evaluation at middle and senior leader level.

Governors are supportive and keen to develop their role in supporting the college and monitoring its progress. They have received training and support from the LA and more is planned. As a result, they are beginning to understand how they can monitor and influence the work of the college. They are better informed of the college's performance and are beginning to ask more challenging questions of leaders. There are plans to take a more active part in reducing absence through their role on an attendance panel. A standards and effectiveness committee has been established to monitor progress against the Ofsted action plan and it is well informed by reports from the headteacher and senior leaders.

The LA audit of teaching and learning, alongside monitoring of lessons by some senior leaders, gives a secure view of the quality of provision and a baseline from which to move forward. Teachers in need of support have been identified and plans for intensive support that involve a learning coach and senior leaders are in place. Some more experienced subject leaders are already taking greater responsibility for developing and extending good practice in teaching and learning within their areas and there are signs of improving practice, for example, in science and English. However, opportunities to share best practice are not yet extensive enough both within subjects, across and beyond the college.

The college is using the LA action plan as its steer for improvement. Senior staff are using the success criteria identified in the plan to measure progress against priorities for action. However, some criteria are less helpful because they do not focus sufficiently on the impact of actions taken on the outcomes for students nor are they measurable. The new headteacher has plans to develop a school improvement plan that will emerge from self-evaluation activities planned for the autumn term.



Statutory requirements are not yet fully in place. Facilities in the new building have enabled curriculum provision for physical education for students in Years 7 to 10 and for ICT for Year 10 students to be increased from the autumn term. Year 11 students will continue to follow the curriculum established from Year 10 and these students will not have met statutory requirements for ICT. Other policies identified as partly in place at the last in inspection have not yet been fully agreed by the full governing body. The review and acceptance of all college policies and a check on statutory requirements is due to take place during the autumn term.

With strengthened leadership and a clearer focus the college is poised to move forward. However, the rate of progress since the last inspection has not been rapid enough. Improvements need to be made with greater urgency to increase the pace of progress. Firm action is required by leaders at all levels to improve the quality of provision and all staff, leaders and governors will have to maintain a tight focus on improvement through the imminent distraction of the move to a new building.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2008:

- Identify clear success criteria in college improvement plans – satisfactory
- Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation to assess accurately the impact of actions taken on students' learning and personal development – inadequate
- Ensure all statutory requirements are fully in place – inadequate

#### External support

The LA statement of action was judged acceptable by Ofsted. The following revisions were required and the first has been acted upon:

- Procedures for ensuring that the monitoring of the planned actions is completed by staff without the direct responsibility for their implementation
- The clarity with which all proposed actions are shown against the timeline.

The LA is seeking clarification from Ofsted with regard to the second revision required.

The LA has provided a satisfactory level of support. The action plan has been followed. School adviser visits and extensive consultant support have been appreciated by staff and leaders and have been effective in bringing about improvements, for example, to the management of behaviour and attendance and to supporting developments in provision within subjects such as the involvement of students in assessing their own learning in English. However, actions planned for this term have not all been completed, hampered particularly by the lack of middle leaders in some key areas of the college. The LA audit of teaching and learning carried out this term has provided an important baseline for improving the quality of provision. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified and it has led to a far more rigorous approach to identification of and support for underperforming staff.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- There are no further priorities for improvement currently.