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Mr Martin Burgess
Headteacher
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Lancashire
BB12 6LH

Dear Mr Burgess

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Shuttleworth College

Following my visit with Anthony Pearson, Mary Sewell and June Tracey Additional Inspectors, to your school on 10 and 11 December 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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 – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed providing that they are given a suitable induction programme and support over the year.

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 second monitoring inspection on 10-11 December 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the college's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of students, governors, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

The college moved into a brand new building in September 2008. The number of students on roll is increasing. Significant staffing difficulties remain in terms of recruitment and long-term absence, particularly in mathematics. There are still too many posts covered by long- and short-term supply teachers. A senior leader responsible for inclusion started in September. The head of mathematics has relinquished the post. The subject will be led by a senior leader on a temporary basis from the start of the spring term until a more permanent appointment is made. From July 2008 the college was identified as a high risk National Challenge school. The governors and the local authority (LA) are in the early stages of negotiating the re-organisation of the college as a National Challenge Trust School within a Burnley Community Trust.

Achievement and standards

The 2008 provisional GCSE examinations results have hardly improved on the previous year, when they were significantly below average. Many students underachieved in relation to their targets. Girls did not achieve as well as boys.

The results of the Key Stage 3 national tests are unvalidated and the results are not reliable because around 18% of English papers have not been marked. The data available shows that standards have not risen significantly on the previous year, when results were significantly below average. Many students underachieved in relation to their targets.

Based on autumn term teachers' assessments, the college's data on progress for current students shows that there is still a considerable amount of underachievement across many subjects including English, mathematics and science and that standards are not yet rising significantly. There are small signs of increasing progress, for example, in the number of students on target to reach GCSE Grade C or above in English and mathematics, as they move from Year 10 to Year 11, with girls increasing their rate of progress more than boys.

Progress in lessons is still patchy but is showing signs of improvement because there is more teaching that sets higher expectations of students' effort. More lessons engage students' interest than at the last visit and consequently students' attitudes

to learning are improving, especially in Key Stage 3. The high number and turnover of temporary staff has affected continuity in teaching and slowed down students' progress, especially in mathematics. Students' weak literacy and numeracy skills are holding back progress across subjects. This is frequently manifested in books in poor presentation of work, weak spelling, punctuation and grammar and in lessons by the inability of students to read, retrieve and select appropriate information. The rate of progress needs to accelerate even more in order for many students to catch up on previous underachievement.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

Personal development and well-being

Behaviour around the college is improving because of the increasing effectiveness of college procedures for promoting good behaviour and attitudes. The public spaces and passageways in the new building are more conducive to the movement and social needs of young people; an improvement recognised by the students themselves. However, not all students show full respect for their surroundings, especially at break and lunchtimes, when too much litter is left in the café areas. Behaviour in classrooms and students' attitudes to their work have improved since the previous visit in line with the improving quality of the learning experiences provided for students. However, there are still occasions when older students are reluctant to get down to work, or the behaviour of a small minority is not acceptable, especially in classes taught by temporary teachers. The number of students excluded has been reduced although the actual number of exclusion days has risen, in part because of recent changes to procedures for placing students in alternative off-site provision during the exclusion period. The college is improving its procedures for reducing the need for permanent exclusions. It is using new well-devised programmes to target students who may be at risk of exclusion, for example the 'Behaviour Hot Spot Timetable', ensuring early intervention where behaviour or attitudes may be giving cause for concern. The student support panel, comprising a broad range of professional expertise from within college and beyond, ensures that students referred receive appropriate support in the form of individualised programmes of study, which may also include the use of outside agencies. These initiatives have not been in place for very long but they are beginning to have an impact.

The college is disappointed and frustrated that overall attendance figures have not improved since the previous monitoring visit and still remain below average. The major focus since then has been tackling the most persistent absentees and more stubborn pockets of poor attendance, for example older girls whose poor attendance is having a discernable negative impact on their achievement. The college has had some success in reducing the number of persistent absentees. In its further drive to improve attendance some new well devised initiatives such as governors' attendance

panels and the 'Keep Kids Safe' text messaging service have not been in operation long enough to demonstrate their effectiveness fully. The college recognises that it needs a more consistent approach to promoting good attendance in the day-to-day work of form tutors and progress managers. However, punctuality has improved markedly because of the consistent application of immediate and escalating sanctions, together with a drive to change the culture by ensuring that students recognise the effects of lateness on achievement. Direct observation of student's punctuality in arriving for the start of the morning session confirms the college's view that a significant number of late arrivals are due to parents bringing their children to college by car. Once in college, few students are late for lessons.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Continue to improve students' attendance and behaviour – satisfactory

Quality of provision

Of the 37 lessons seen around half were good or better, an improvement on the previous visit. A few outstanding lessons were seen. A small proportion of lessons remain inadequate. This confirms the evaluation of both the college and the LA that the quality of teaching has improved since the last visit. Through close monitoring, senior leaders have a clear picture of how teaching and learning need to be improved. The college has rigorously tackled poor teaching and packages of support have benefited individual teachers. Well focused intensive training and support for all staff has been provided by LA consultants and, increasingly, from staff within the college. Teaching and non-teaching staff have responded enthusiastically and many have been so well motivated they have attended additional sessions. Senior leaders recognised that inconsistencies within and between subjects have been a barrier to improvement, and consequently have strengthened the role of subject leaders in ensuring they take greater responsibility for the quality of provision in their subjects. This, alongside the impact of the training, is beginning to bring a more consistent approach. Though improved overall, there remains inconsistent practice, in part due to the considerable staff turnover.

The majority of teachers plan lessons using the college format. In the good lessons, plans identify clearly what skills, knowledge and understanding students will develop or learn. However, planning does not always take into account the needs of individual learners and, as a result, more able students are insufficiently challenged in too many lessons. The pace of learning has improved because well planned and timed activities drive the rate of learning, and more teachers are taking risks and including more active learning opportunities in lessons. Students were keen to talk about how their lessons had changed and had become more exciting because they take a more active part in many lessons. The behaviour and motivation of the students has improved because the majority of staff use the behaviour code consistently and are able to reward students with 'merits' which are converted to tangible prizes. Marking is still very variable. In too many books marking is neither

linked to the learning expectation of the lesson nor to national criteria. This means that students are not set appropriate targets for improvement, nor do they understand how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. The practice of involving students in the assessment process is patchy. Where students have a clear understanding of what is expected in a piece of work they respond well to, and benefit from, evaluating their own and each other's work. However, there are times when this process is rushed or superficial and neither students nor teachers gain a great deal from it. The teaching of basic skills is underdeveloped. Consequently, the high number of students with weak literacy skills, many with learning difficulties, are not well served.

The use of assessment information to identify and tackle underachievement is improving. Systems have been put into place this term that ensure more robust use of assessment data and increased communication between academic and pastoral leaders. The accuracy of teachers' assessment is improving as departments take measures both internally and externally to moderate assessment. Data on students' progress is gathered regularly and shared with all staff in increasingly useful forms. Assessment data is being used by senior leaders to monitor the progress of all students and to set challenging targets for students in every subject. Progress leaders are using the assessment information to identify individual students at risk of underachieving and have put into place a number of intervention and support programmes. For example, students identified in Year 11 as at risk of not reaching their target of GCSE grade C are undertaking a variety of support programmes and mentoring, much of which is provided through National Challenge funding. Subject leaders have started to use the data to identify groups and classes that are falling behind. They have established the expectation that class teachers put in place strategies to support students at risk of underachievement.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

Leadership and management

The move into the new building in September raised the morale of staff and students and their pride in the college. Teachers and leaders are perceived by students to be lively and enthusiastic. The headteacher is the driving force behind the improvements seen. He has inspired staff by delegating responsibility to senior and middle managers so that they can do their job, and has brought about a positive change in the culture and learning environment. All students now have challenging targets and consequently, students are beginning to aspire to higher standards. Attitudes and behaviour have improved; although still not consistent, they reflect most students' positive response to the changes that are shaping all aspects of their work in class and in other activities. As yet, achievement is below what might be

expected for students' age but the systems being introduced are practicable and have the potential to raise standards over time.

The college's action plan is devised well to target priorities that have a direct effect on students' learning. Improving teaching and learning is central to development programmes and is the focus of training for all staff. The headteacher and senior leaders make expectations very clear and make suitable arrangements to support staff in achieving them. A contributory factor is the regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its impact on students' progress. Middle managers are fully involved in the process, which enables them to observe at first hand what works and what doesn't. This contributes well to evaluations of their own areas of responsibility and holds them to account for students' progress and personal development. The whole-college self-evaluation is becoming more rigorous and analytical, which is leading to sharper targets in the development plan. The college now has increasingly effective teams of senior and middle leaders, each of whom is seeking to develop their role to meet the college's exact needs. The cross-fertilisation of information is highlighting opportunities where the best practices can be shared more effectively.

The college is gaining confidence in its ability to determine the extent to which it is meeting the criteria in the action plan. What is more, it is quick to add or modify elements as new demands become apparent. For example, weaknesses in students' numerical and literacy skills have been highlighted for attention, as has the need for better matching of work to students' prior learning in some lessons.

The match of teachers' subject knowledge and expertise has improved since the previous visit but the college is still experiencing some difficulties, especially in mathematics. The mathematics department is not fully staffed by permanent teachers, which is detrimental to students' progressive learning and self-confidence in the subject. The college is managing, supporting and deploying its permanent teachers satisfactorily but the high turnover of temporary staff is diminishing the consistency of students' progress in some subjects and is undermining their confidence in the quality of the provision.

Governors are keen to support the college and are much more proactive than at the time of the last visit. Through well planned training, they have learned how to ask pertinent questions of the college and to expect answers. The Standards and Effectiveness committee is monitoring satisfactorily the college's journey through its action plan. Governors understand their role in accounting for the college's performance. They are familiar with the college's self-evaluation and the reasons for the weaknesses identified, which helps them to make satisfactory decisions about curriculum, planning and financial matters.

The college is closer to meeting statutory requirements than at the time of the previous visit but a few elements are still only partially fulfilled. Students in Year 11

do not receive their full entitlement to information and communication technology and physical education. The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act are not fully met, nor are the implications for community cohesion. Arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of students, including checks on overseas trained teachers meet current government requirements

Overall, the leadership is providing an improved and systematic infrastructure that is enabling it to hold leaders and middle managers to account for students' progress and achievements. Governors believe that the college staff is working much more closely as a team than previously. The challenge now is to make the systems work for the students so that assessment records show measurable, accelerated progress for all, in all subjects, each term.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- 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 – satisfactory
- Ensure all statutory requirements are fully in place – satisfactory

External support

The LA has provided a good level of support. Support and training provided by the LA's monitoring inspector, consultants and a learning coach have contributed to improvements in teaching and learning and leadership. Effective consultancy has supported improvements in behaviour management and attendance. A recent week of intensive support provided by LA consultants was appreciated by many staff, but was not fully effective in all subjects.

The LA plays a significant role in monitoring the college's progress and reporting to governors on progress. The monitoring inspector is temporarily also the college improvement partner, an arrangement that is working satisfactorily. The LA is guiding the college and governors through the process of becoming a National Challenge Trust school and part of a Burnley Community Partnership.

Priorities for further improvement

- Develop a well focused approach to developing and improving students' basic literacy and numeracy skills across subjects.
- Improve the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Ensure greater consistency in the use of assessment so that tasks in lessons can be properly matched to students' abilities and all students fully challenged.
- Ensure that all students know their targets and how they can improve their work in order to reach them.